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MR. GRANT's

OBSERVATIONS

On the State of Society among the *Asiatic* Subjects of *Great Britain*, particularly with respect to Morals: and on the means of improving it.—Written chiefly in the Year 1792.

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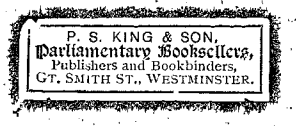
Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be printed,*
15 *June* 1813.



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To the Honourable The Court of DIRECTORS for the Affairs of The East India Company.

HONOURABLE SIRS,

ACCORDING to the intimation which I lately took the liberty of giving, I have now the honour to submit to your consideration, a tract which bears upon a subject pressed by repeated proposals on your attention, namely, the communication of Christianity to the natives of our possessions in the East.

That this is a question of importance, will hardly be denied; and from the numerous letters which have been addressed to the Court, in favour of such communication, as well as from the share of general regard now bestowed on subjects of that nature, it appears to be a question on which an explicit determination, on the part of the Company, is become necessary.

It is therefore in different views, worthy of a full and candid discussion; and such I have been solicitous to give it, actuated solely by motives of duty, arising from the several relations in which I find myself placed. For, in becoming an advocate, as I profess myself to be, for making known to our Asiatic subjects, the pure and benign principles of our divine religion, I not only pay that obedience which is due to its authoritative injunctions, but, in my sincere opinion, highly consult the true interests of the Company, and the general welfare of the many millions living under its government. Nor can I doubt, that this will be the verdict of serious deliberation, however a hasty view of the subject, under some of its aspects, may have unnecessarily excited alarm.

In earlier periods, the Company manifested a laudable zeal for extending, as far as its means then went, the knowledge of the Gospel to the Pagan tribes, among whom its factories were placed. It has since prospered and become great, in a way to which the commercial history of the world affords no parallel; and for this it is indebted to the fostering and protecting care of divine Providence. It owes therefore, the warmest gratitude for the past, and it equally needs the support of the same beneficent Power in time to come; for the "changes and chances" to which human affairs are always liable, and especially the emphatic lessons of vicissitude which the present day has supplied, may assure us, that neither elevation nor safety can be maintained by any of the nations or rulers, of the earth, but through Him who governs the whole. The duty therefore of the Company, as part of a Christian community, its peculiar superadded obligations, its enlarged means, and its continual dependence upon the divine favour, all call upon it to honour God, by diffusing the knowledge of that revelation which he has vouchsafed to mankind.

In urging this momentous work however, I wish to be clearly understood, as connecting with the formation and execution of any scheme for the performance of it, every prudent care, every just precaution, which may be suitable to the nature of the undertaking, and to the wise, humble, mild spirit of that religion which is to be recommended. At present I presume to offer no specific proposal, contending only for the general principle; but if that is recognised, I shall be most ready to submit the ideas I entertain of the manner in which it might be safely brought into operation.

If the considerations already adduced, did not sufficiently guard me against the censure of launching beyond the ordinary lines of business, I might justly plead, that the office which you, Gentlemen, exercise, and which I have the honour to hold in common with you, summons, not unfrequently, your attention to subjects of the highest

highest nature,—to the principles of government, and the interests of nations; subjects upon which, having mentioned them, I may be permitted to observe, that even a deliberative voice, though to that you are not restrained, attaches a trust of great importance to the station of a Director.

But with respect to the execution of the treatise which is now offered to your perusal, I am sensible that I need the utmost indulgence. Incapable at best to do justice to the several topics which it embraces, I might yet in India, the centre of materials and information relating to them, have produced something less unworthy of notice; but though I held there the leading opinions now advanced, no idea of giving any publicity to them, by writing, ever occurred to me, until after my return to this country, when persuaded of the expediency of some attempt of that kind, and incited by a particular occasion, I several years ago, hastily drew up the substance of the present essay. It has however since lien by me unused, and my other avocations have allowed me only to revise it, not to form a new work, as would certainly have been desirable. To meet a variety of opinions, and to fortify the argument which is maintained in it, many things are introduced which must be already known to you, and indeed things which in my own first views, I should have deemed superfluous; for according to my apprehension, the main question is so clear as to need little auxiliary illustration. Under all these disadvantages, however, I am content to come forward, at the call of a greater interest, forming no pretension to literary merit, nor having on that score, any higher hope, than that you may be pleased to receive this tract on the footing of one of those many *Papers of Business*, with which the records of your governments have been furnished, by the observation and experience of men whose time and thoughts have been chiefly employed in the concerns of active life.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

CHARLES GRANT.

East-India House,
August 16th, 1797.

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OBSERVATIONS,
&c.

CHAP I.

Introduction—including a brief Review of British *Territorial Administration in* The East.

CHAP. I. *Introduction: British territorial Administration in The East.*

WHATEVER diversity of opinion may have prevailed respecting the past conduct of the English in the East, all parties will concur in one sentiment, that we ought to study the happiness of the vast body of subjects which we have acquired there. Upon this proposition, taken as a truth of the highest certainty and importance, the following Observations, now submitted with great deference, are founded.

He who ventures to propose a plan which has an air of novelty, at a time when the wildest fanaticism in politics and philosophy is pursuing, with impious and inhuman success, the indiscriminate subversion of received principles and existing establishments, labours under peculiar disadvantages. Truth however, and reason, always the same, are not to be abandoned because they may sometimes be perverted and abused. Of late they have been perverted and abused in a way new in the history of the world. The writer of these observations holds the spirit that has thus broken forth, in the utmost abhorrence, and would stand at the remotest distance from its influence. His aim is to promote the peace and happiness of men, by pacific and rational means, and where he is compelled to speak of past or present errors and defects, he mentions them with no disposition to censure, but solely with the view of doing good. He trusts, that if the opinions which he delivers, and the measures which he recommends in the subsequent pages, be patiently and impartially considered, they will neither be found inconsistent with right principles, nor pointing to any other than the most beneficial consequences.

Although in theory it never can have been denied, that the welfare of our Asiatic subjects ought to be the object of our solicitude, yet in practice, this acknowledged truth has been but slowly followed up, and some of the inferences which are deducible from it, remain, as it should seem, still to be discovered. Of late undoubtedly much has been done, and excellently done, to improve the condition of our subjects in the East; yet upon an attentive examination it may perhaps be found, that much still remains to be performed.

It is now five-and-thirty years since the English East-India Company, and through that Company the British Nation, acquired an extensive political power in Hindostan. Some time before this period, they had been compelled by the ambition of the French, to take a part in contests which had arisen among the Mahomedan Princes on the Coromandel Coast; for the representatives of that nation, the first among the people of Europe who conceived the design of procuring a dominion out of the broken empire of the Moguls, pursued their object by entering systematically into the politics of the Decan, and becoming hence the ally of one of the parties contending for the possession of the Carnatic, the English who foreseeing the success which would probably attend the unchecked prosecution of this ambitious enterprize, and in the consequent aggrandizement of their rivals, the ruin of their own commercial establishments, espoused the defensible pretensions of the other side. In this struggle they were finally victorious; they gave a Nabob to the Carnatic, who continued to depend upon them; and were thus advanced to a certain degree of military and political importance in the eyes of the natives of that part of India. But that prince was left by treaty in full possession of the internal government of his territories, and exercised all the powers of sovereignty over the people of them. The only pos-

A. D. 1757.

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session which the English retained for themselves, was a narrow tract of land along the Coast of Coromandel, chiefly in the vicinity of their principal settlement of Madras.

Bengal was destined to be the seat of British empire in the East. The first military operations however of the nation in that province, instead of being prompted by views of conquest, were employed solely for the defence of their principal factory, suddenly, when they thought only of the peaceable pursuits of commerce, wantonly attacked by the Nabob of the country, the recent successor of an usurper, with a numerous army. The English of Calcutta, having neither men nor means adequate to this unexpected service, fell an easy prey, and the survivors of the barbarous scenes then exhibited, were driven from their plundered settlement, and, destitute of every thing, forced to seek a wretched refuge on the water. At this crisis, the warfare and the political transactions into which the English had been led in the Carnatic, appeared of new importance. By the result of them, the government of Madras was itself in a condition to assert by arms the right of the Company and the Nation, to the settlements of which they had been dispossessed in Bengal, and to seek a compensation for the immense property of which they had been despoiled.

That right was unquestionable; it was derived from the lawful sovereign of Hindostan, when the empire was in the zenith of its power, and had long been quietly enjoyed. The struggle made for the recovery and security of it, which was on our part self-defence, ended in the ruin of the aggressor; for after once breaking with us, he never thought himself safe until we should be extirpated. Fresh plots for our destruction soon terminated a pacification, in which he had never been sincere; we were reduced to the alternative of suffering extirpation from our just and ancient possession, or maintaining by force our footing in the country against the oppressive ruler of it; and a handful of foreigners driven to this extremity, accepted the offers of confederacy, which his sanguinary tyranny impelled some of the principal persons living under his government to make, for his deposition, and the substitution of another Mussulman in his room. Perhaps the rigid casuists might not choose to defend the expedient of facilitating the progress of our arms, by leaguing with the subjects of the Nabob, imminent as our danger and theirs was. This point must be left to be tried upon its own merits; but whatever decision may be passed concerning it, two things are in fairness entitled to attention in the general consideration of this subject:—First, that it is probable the Company and the Nation, had they remained without confederates, never would have submitted to be wantonly stript of valuable rights; therefore the maintenance of them, with further accessions of force derived from their own resources, might have produced the discomfiture of their enemy, and by an easy consequence, his loss of power:—Secondly, that the confederation into which the English entered was no part of their original plan, but an incidental circumstance in the sequel of hostilities.

From this circumstance however, viewed in the most unfavorable light, prejudice has taken occasion to characterize the whole of their transactions of that period; and the French, who as has been said, first of the European nations, conceived the scheme of Indian war and conquest, and whose game of wanton ambition ended in the loss of all their possessions in the East, have not failed to describe the revolution in Bengal as originating in our lawless lust of wealth and dominion. Many of the inflammatory misrepresentations which envious disappointed rivalship has prompted them to make, our own countrymen have precipitately adopted, not examining whether, in their readiness to testify an abhorrence of injustice towards the natives of India, they were not inadvertently contributing to do injustice to the character of their own nation. But as in any serious inquiry into the duties which we owe to our subjects in that country, men of correct principles will naturally be led to carry back their view to the first steps by which we acquired power there, it is hoped that some brief elucidation of so important a question, both here and as it may come again into notice in the course of this essay, will be deemed no irrelevant digression.

By the deposition of Surajah Dowlah, the provinces which he had ruled, fell first under the control of the English, and subsequently under their immediate management. They acquired also among the conquests made from the French soon after this revolution, a tract of country on the Coromandel Coast, called from its relative situation, the Northern Circars; and at a later period, the celebrated district of Benares was annexed by cession to their possessions on the Ganges. These countries, thus acquired, and now held in full property by the British Nation, joining with them

Bombay

Bombay and Salsett, are reckoned by that able geographer, Major Rennel, to contain 182,000 square miles, that is 50,000 square miles more than are, according to him, contained in Great Britain and Ireland; and the population of these extensive regions may be estimated at about fourteen millions*. Besides these absolute acquisitions, the fertile territory of Oude, with its appendages, is to be reckoned among the states dependent on the British power, which are governed internally by their own princes; and all the territories which come under this description, are by the same author, computed to contain nearly 100,000 square miles. Supposing their population to be in proportion less than that of Bengal, it may be allowable to state it at six millions. The conquests lately made in the Mysore Country, and on the Malabar Coast, are to be added to the account of the territorial property of the British Nation. They have not been directly comprehended in the foregoing enumeration, because it is intended to speak chiefly upon the authority of time and experience; but the observations which these suggest, respecting the people with whom we are already acquainted, will doubtless equally apply to those of the same race and principles, who are recently become our subjects. The number of these last may perhaps be estimated at two millions. Thus the whole aggregate of Asiatics who depend immediately and solely upon us for every comfort and happiness of good government, amounts to sixteen millions†; and those who indirectly and partially depend upon us, by living under princes subject to our control, and therefore considerably under our influence, if we chose to exert it, even in matters of interior regulation, amount, as has been stated, to six millions. Such a charge as this, a charge of no less than two-and-twenty millions‡ of people, must be allowed to be one of the most weighty and serious nature, as it constitutes also one of the largest divisions of the power which is distributed among the rulers of the earth.

What then has been the effect of our administration upon the countries which have thus fallen under our dominion? This is no unfair inquiry, nor is it proposed invidiously, but as having a relation to the main design of the ensuing pages; neither shall it be pursued upon conjectural positions or by problematical reasonings, but rested on the broad basis of general facts, many of which stand conspicuous in the records of our Indian transactions. That the same topics have already been handled by persons of distinguished situations, and especially that abilities have been employed upon them far transcending the humble pretensions of the present writer, would invincibly determine him to abstain from treating of them, if his design did not impose this task upon him, and impose it with a view which other writers have not exactly proposed to themselves. Happily this undertaking calls not for the powers or the details of regular history; nor on the other hand would it be answered by the exhibition of mere results, which would carry more the air of assertions than of facts. Facts therefore so far circumstantiated as to be seen in their truth and their connection, it will be his endeavour to trace with simplicity, and with moderation.

The account of our territorial management in the East, or of the internal exercise of our power in those countries which are now held directly by us, may be conveniently arranged into four distinct periods, of which it will be sufficient here to sketch the prominent features; and as Bengal with its appendant provinces forms both the main portion of our possessions, and the scene of our greatest exertions, experience, and progress, *that division* shall be the subject of our present brief review, with only such concluding notice of the other parts, as may serve to indicate the state to which they have hitherto advanced.

In the first period, comprehending eight years, from 1757 to 1765, the provinces (excepting a few districts ceded to the Company in the course of that time, with the sanction of the Mogul Emperor) were continued under the government of Nabobs, to whom the administration of civil and criminal justice, the collection of the revenues, and the general powers of internal superintendence and regulation, were left. The English reserved to themselves the direction of foreign policy, a controlling military power, a considerable tribute, and advantages in trade more extensive than the grants of the Emperors, or the past usage of the country, had conceded to them. *A. D.* 1757 to 1765

The

* The latest estimates would make Bengal, Behar, and our part of Orissa, to contain at least twelve millions. If they do, the whole population of these different possessions may amount to sixteen millions.

† Or according to the preceding note, eighteen millions.

‡ Or according to the same note, twenty-four millions.

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The circumstances of the first revolution seemed to dictate such a division of power; of which, the share vested in the Nabob, is usually called in the writings of that time, the *Country* or the *Native Government*, as when the mass of both divisions, or the complex power, Native and European was spoken of, it was termed (sometimes in a way of censure) the *Double* Government. To this arrangement the orders of the Company seem to have at first restricted their servants, who if they had felt themselves more at liberty, would perhaps have deemed it unsafe or inexpedient to enter at once upon the direct charge of a government, to the details of which they were entire strangers.

But plausible as the system, viewed in some lights, appeared, it proved in practice, unsatisfactory to all parties, and especially detrimental to the people. The Eastern governments are in general careless as to the interests of their subjects, and this is particularly true of Mahomedan rulers. The Nabobs created by the English in Bengal, foreign adventurers suddenly raised to power, dependent, suspicious, and rapacious, could have little concern for the lasting prosperity of a country, with the government of which, their connection was so casual and precarious. Whilst they saw with secret indignation the chief attributes of sovereignty in the possession of a handful of commercial men, every way alien to the Asiatic world, and so large a share of the riches of the country, devoted through them to a distant land; whilst they believed also that the favour of these people was uncertain, they could scarcely have any other aim, than to use the time present in making the most of their situations.

And indeed such seems to have been the temper of the other princes more remotely placed, who were stiled the allies, but who in reality were the dependents of the East India Company. Feeling that the same power which supported could also dispossess them, and habituated by the whole history and the manners of Hindostan to the ideas of perfidy and of change, they could have no settled confidence in the solidity of their tenures, but be on the contrary indisposed to that study to which Eastern rulers at the best need a stimulus, the permanent good of their subjects. Asiatics, accustomed either to absolute command or implicit obedience, do not seem well qualified to make a beneficial use of delegated or mixed power. The policy of our dependent allies has in general been directed only to secure themselves in their situations; it has been their aim to please the immediate arbiters of their fate, and they have found either sagaciously or by incidental discovery, that even running largely in debt is one means of interesting many in the stability of their government. But this policy is pursued at the expense of their subjects, and the people, both of Arcot and of Oude, are with too much foundation represented to be in a wretched condition. A state of dependence seems also to unfit or indispose the princes who stand to us in this relation, for any vigorous co-operation in the external defence of their own territories. Perhaps that species of protection to which they have been used, has enervated them, made them unwilling to contribute the funds requisite in such cases, and persuaded them that the English will not suffer those countries of which they are in effect the paramount lords, to be possessed by any other power. Another evil, more formidable possibly than our experience has yet discovered, flows from this system; it enlarges the sphere of advantage to the servants, especially the military servants of the Company, it enlarges the military establishment, military emoluments, and perhaps encourages, in its consequences, the spirit of military independence. The experience we have acquired, may probably establish an opinion of the impolicy of forming any new connections of this nature; but with respect to those which already subsist, as it is our power which maintains the authority of our dependent allies over their subjects, it seems incumbent on us to exert every possible endeavour, consistent with the just sense and faith of treaties, that the governments which we thus uphold may render the people easy and happy.

Where the controlling power of the English and the derived power of the dependent Nabob met in one place, as in Bengal, they could not long exist together without collision. The unwilling submission of the weaker party, and the dominating temper of the stronger, soon became too plain; mutual distrust and aversion succeeded; the excesses of individuals inflamed the animosity on each side, and the country became the unfortunate scene of war. The cruelties, the rapacity, and the expulsion of Cossim Ali, whom an unhappy policy had elevated to power, are sufficiently known. Whether we ascribe his conduct to unprincipled ambition, or the licentious encroachments of Europeans and their dependents upon his proper authority, or with more probability

probability to both of these causes, and the maddening effect of events hurrying him to lengths he had not deliberately purposed, it still exhibited this striking spectacle, the English obliged to fight with the creature of their own power, for the continuance of that power, nay even for their existence in Bengal; and the country, instead of being better protected under co-existing authorities, suffering grievously by both, and in their shock convulsed and torn. What had thus happened, however blameable the cause, might happen again; and this experience purchased at so dear a rate, naturally led the way to the acquisition of the Dewannee of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa.

A. D. 1765. This may be considered as a point at which a second period of territorial management commences. The Dewannee is the office of the Dewan, the title of the provincial collector of revenues under the Mogul Emperors, whose policy it was to place the financial administration of the several divisions of the empire, in hands distinct from those entrusted with military command and judicial authority.

The adventurers who upon the decline of the empire, assumed the powers of government in the provinces, assumed also the exclusive administration and appropriation of the revenues, as most essential to their views. The rights of the reigning emperor however, though disregarded, had never been denied. He was induced, in consideration of an annual tribute to himself, and a handsome stipend to the reigning Nabob, who was also a party in this treaty, to grant in perpetuity to the East-India Company for their own benefit, the Dewannee, that is in other words, the revenues of those three provinces. He had not at that time, nor was likely ever to have the least power to assert his rights; his bestowing that grant therefore, on the condition of an ample compensation, was making the most advantageous use he possibly could make of his pretensions. No other power in Hindostan would have given him such favourable terms; and his consciousness of this led him voluntarily to propose a cession of the Dewannee. It is thence to be concluded, that in this transaction he was guided chiefly by the exigencies of his own situation; for his remote distance from the seat of the Company's government must have rendered their influence over him proportionably weak. But at the same time it ought to be acknowledged, that the subsequent proceeding with him, by which the payment of the stipulated tribute was discontinued, appears to be of a more dubious character. This remark also is interjected for the sake of those who question the principles on which our acquisitions have been made.

The Company having before held a controlling military power, were thus put in possession of the finances of the country, which as an immense estate they were henceforth to manage, and to manage for themselves. The collection of the revenues there is known to have been till of late a business of extreme intricacy and detail; the causes of which have been explained in a variety of masterly productions, particularly the excellent writings of Mr. Shore* on this subject; into which, however, it will not be necessary to go farther here than the statement of certain usages which form the first lines of the Indian system of finance. In Hindostan, far the greater part of the revenue of the sovereign arises from land; and it has long been the universal practice to form the assessment of government upon the actual produce of the soil, and to do this annually. Not unfrequently the share of government has been paid in kind. In like manner the land-holder regulates the rent of his inferior tenant annually, and according to the value of the articles which he raises, whether rice, cotton, sugar, or any other of the many productions which the soil furnishes. It will easily be perceived, that this system as it naturally leads to concealment on the one side, requires a constant course of vigilance and laborious local investigation on the other, in every rank of persons employed in the revenue, from the first officer to the lowest farmer of a village. Again, the sovereign is arbiter of the share which he himself shall enjoy of the produce; and though anciently his proportion seems to have been moderate, in modern times it has usually been very large. Despotism being the principle of government, force is the real, though sometimes latent instrument which procures acquiescence in his allotments. Without a compulsory power, ever ready to act, little revenue would be obtained. Arbitrary demand, peremptorily enforced on the one hand, sharpens all the arts of evasion, concealment, and fraud, on the other.

Since

* Now Sir John Shore, Governor-General, in which high station he has largely added to the important services he had before rendered to the Company.

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Since the fall of the Mogul Empire especially, and under the Asiatics, Hindoos, or Mahomedans, who have usurped power, the business of collecting the revenues has been a most debasing struggle between the superior and inferior in every gradation. New taxes upon a thousand pretences, often false and preposterous, have been imposed even in direct breach of agreements before made. The revenue officers of every rank, have exacted for themselves besides collecting the demands of government; and from this fruitful source of injustice, severity, chicane, and meanness, have flowed innumerable evils to the community. Want of principle in the landholders and occupants of the soil, has led the government to give them as little credit for their rents as possible; so that payment may in some places be required at the end of every month, or more often, by eight instalments in the year. From the inferior occupants of the soil, care is taken to secure arrears before the crops are removed from the ground, for otherwise from the property and artifices of that description of persons, those arrears will generally be in effect lost; because if they are recovered at a future period, it is in reality by an application of the produce of a new year, which having its own exigencies, will thence probably also owe a balance at the close. And as hence the necessity of summary proceeding with the renters has been pleaded, their complaints have not been allowed to suspend the payment of the demand on them; but this unremitting exaction has afforded the agent the opportunity of keeping his own malversations covered.

These elucidations may convey a faint idea of the vast detail and attendant difficulty of the Indian system of finance; notwithstanding the apparent simplicity of its fundamental principle*; but they also suggest that the power which enforces the payment of the revenues, as it is operative at all times and comes home to all persons, must be the first in the consideration of the people †.

The Company therefore were now not only to reap the produce of the country, but were virtually invested with the interior government of it, none of the prerogatives of dominion remaining to the Nabob ‡, excepting the judicial power which was attended with no political importance. It was not however the policy of their servants, nor did they at first think themselves able to exercise all this power; but in entering upon their new privileges they made use of ministers who had served the Nabob in the affairs of the revenue. The people were taught henceforth to regard the Company as their masters; but they were treated with through the medium of the same persons with whom, as agents of the Nabob, they had before transacted. No Englishman was employed in the districts, or in the details of the collections, that is to say of the Dewannee lands §. The Mahomedan and Hindoo ministers of the revenue managed the whole, appointing all the subordinate officers, laying their general schemes of assessment before the principal servants of the Company, reporting to them the state of the collections from time to time, and disposing of the money received into the exchequer, according to their orders. The only persons who in the districts represented the Company in the exercise of the new powers they had acquired, were the same persons who on behalf of the native government exercised the like powers in them before; nevertheless, the effects of this change, besides the transfer of the financial rights and profits of the country to new hands, were many and important.

The

* The most methodical and full exposition extant of the Mogul system of finance is to be found in the *Analysis of the Revenues of Bengal* by Mr. *James Grant*, a work which though it ought to have been set on foot by government at the moment of acquiring the Dewannee, was never attempted till he, from private curiosity, entered upon it many years afterwards, when the obtainment of accurate information on such a subject was become peculiarly difficult. In this elaborate treatise, he has developed with minute detail, both the principles of the Mogul system of finance and the sources and amount of the revenues collected from every division, great and small, of the soubah of Bengal, as well in remote periods as in the year preceding the assumption of the Dewannee. It contains a more complete account of the lands of Bengal than that rendered to our government by the native ministers in 1765, but is little known, being being in manuscript among the records of the Company, and too much loaded with technical and involved language, the fundamental principle also of the Mogul system of finance having since been superseded in our practice; but it is the product of extraordinary disquisitory powers employed upon a curious and interesting subject

† Strictly speaking, it must be supreme. The power of the Emperor went along with his Dewan. The English possessed the Dewannee only because they had power (which was not used before) to assert the grant.

‡ Who was the descendant of Jaffier Ali Khan, the first Nabob raised by the English, with whom a treaty had been made, in virtue of which, the succession was continued in his family.

§ Some districts, as observed above, were by cession before in the hands of the Company; who also had possessed commercial factories in the provinces above a century.

The wants and desires of the Company at home seemed to grow with this immense acquisition. Their servants abroad were suspicious, and not without reason, that all the sources of revenue might not be fairly disclosed to them; and they were alarmed lest the amount of it should decline under their management. The progressive accessions of the Company also enlarged the views of every European in the provinces, and of the native dependents of Europeans. Power was not, as in the former system of government, inherent in one person only, but in many persons, all of whom therefore it invested with a portion of its consequence. The native ministers of the revenue wished to gratify the eager views of the Company, and to conciliate the general favour of the English. They had likewise their own interests and their numerous dependents to serve, and to serve whilst opportunity lasted; but whatever extraordinary funds they might with these aims seek to possess, as all parties concurred in the urgency of keeping up the standard of the public income, the only means left them, exclusive of the salaries they enjoyed, were private imposts, monopolies, or appropriations of one kind or another; and if, as has been affirmed with great appearance of truth, certain portions of the government lands were omitted in the accounts presented to their new masters. the burthen upon the rest must from this cause, as from others, have fallen the heavier.

Difficulties began to be experienced in realizing the assessment. A set of coercive officers or rather farmers of the revenue were employed in the districts to ensure and quicken the payment. These men, chiefly adventurers from Tartary or Persia, executed their business rigorously. Unfeeling and rapacious, uncertain of holding their employments beyond the year, they lost no time in amassing money for themselves; and the Zemindars, or principal land-holders, made every extraordinary demand upon them, the ground of still more excessive demands upon the interior tenants.

Compulsory measures came also to be used in providing the investment of the Company. As the new wealth poured into their treasury could be realized in Europe only by the medium of commerce, the orders for that investment were at once augmented two or three fold. The produce of every country and the demand for that produce having a certain relation to each other, it was impossible that the funds now destined for the purchase of commodities on account of the Company, could be invested at once without extruding private merchants. European individuals also, confident now both of protecting and controlling their native agents, employed them in trade all over the country; and the foreign European companies and their dependents, availing themselves of the substitution of the milder genius of English rule, for the prompt despotism of the Mahomedans, every where encreased their pretensions and activity. The manufacturers were not unfrequently obliged to accept the English Company's employ, and even those private agents required a preference to other traders. Some of the native dealers retired. Both natives and foreigners, especially those attached to the other European companies, complained; though the latter not always reasonably nor temperately; and in a word, violence and disorder became too prevalent.

Wherever the native agents of the English traders went, they assumed power; they interfered in the affairs of the country, and even in the proceedings of the courts of justice, which the Company still left solely under the control of the Nabob. These courts, which ought to have been the sure refuge of the oppressed, were before systematically venal, and in a time of divided power and general relaxation, were become so scandalously corrupt, as to constitute one of the most intolerable evils under which the country groaned.

All these causes operating with the energy of a new revolution, produced a great and unhappy pressure upon the country. It was in fact without a proper head. The English administration left the internal government to the native ministers, and these, little under the influence of public spirit, (a rare quality among the Asiatics,) intent chiefly on the affairs of the revenue, were unwilling to offend by honestly resisting the licentiousness of individuals.

With respect however to the Company and to Europeans in general, these various evils proceeded more from the elation of new success, from extravagant notions of the resources of the country, and unreflecting eagerness, than from intentional rapacity. They did not feel that the cognizance of the internal affairs of the country was a duty resting upon them, and they may have implicitly given credit to the ministers, more

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intelligent than themselves, for a regard to that important concern. From these causes, and the remoteness of the seat of English government, placed near one of the extremities of the country, they remained ignorant of the true state of the interior, nor were they fully aware that the natives whom they employed would exercise against their own countrymen any power, even falsely assumed, in the most unfeeling and iniquitous manner. They had not in fine, at all preconsidered the probable effects of so great a change as the assignment of the Dewannee to the Company *.

A. D. 1769. In less than four years these effects showed themselves very plainly. The country exhibited unequivocal signs of impoverishment and decay. The trade to the other parts of India was reduced, and the revenues, with encreased exertions, could not be kept up to their first standard. In truth, upon a comparison of the state of the country in the year 1757, after the battle of Plassey, and in 1769, when the power of the English, in one form or another, had predominated twelve years, the result is extremely against the revolution. The English are not directly chargeable with the misconduct of the Nabobs and their ministers to whom they entrusted authority, especially with the ruinous enormities of Cossim Ali; but in the transfer of the country to a set of European merchants, consequences were involved unfavourable to its prosperity. The specie which those merchants and others had for a long series of years annually imported, ceased to flow in. The English Company bought their large investment, encreased to three times the amount at which it stood when bullion was brought to pay for it, with the revenue of the provinces; other companies made their purchases with money received from English individuals, who also derived it from the country; and this was to be the system thence forward, at least for the greater part of the exports. Neither did the evil stop here. Both the Company and private persons exported large sums of specie collected there. The quantity thus extracted from the country, even within the period spoken of, was astonishing. A want of circulating medium began to be felt. These drains, added to the immense treasures which the extortion of Cossim Ali enabled him to carry off, exceedingly reduced the stock of the country, and the disorders which had arisen in the districts threatened to impair its annual produce. The first person who had the integrity and resolution to call the attention of government to the unhappy state of the country, was Mr. Becher, resident at the Durbar.

Certainly a great deal was due from us to the people in compensation of the evils which the establishment of our power had introduced among them; and in return for the vast advantages which we reaped from the change, it was but fit that what the country had suffered, or was subjected unavoidably to lose by being dependent upon us, should be repaid by all the benefits which good government, in consistency at least with that dependence, could bestow. And there was in the national genius of Britain, formed by superior lights and juster principles, and possessed of higher energies, what might still render that country happier than it had ever been before.

A. D. 1769. To discover and suppress the abuse of trust and power in the collection of the revenues, in the purchase of the investment, and in the conduct of the courts of justice †, were the objects of another institution, which forms the commencement of a third period of territorial management. English servants of the Company were sent as supervisors into the districts, and the coercive officers whom the ministers had employed, were withdrawn. The supervisors were furnished with a commission of investigation and active superintendence over the various departments of provincial administration, the state, the peace, and order of the country; but without the direct charge of any department. To many persons in Europe these progressive assumptions of power may have appeared as so many exorbitant encroachments; but whatever may have been thought at first even by judicious men, if we determined to retain the country and to govern it either to the benefit of the people, or to our own, they were necessary. From the first acquisition of a controlling power to the possession of the entire executive government of those provinces, it has been found that there was no point at which to rest. Experience evinced that in every intermediate stage, the interest of the country was neglected, and the abuses of power more felt than its protection. Our national standard of sentiments and morals,

* Mr. Verelst, who was Governor of Bengal during this period, was certainly a man of fair intention and correct in his personal conduct. His successor, Mr. Cartier, was also a very honest and amiable man.

† Private European traders and the Native agents of Europeans, who had in the beginning of the Company's power been guilty of such disorders in the districts, were by this time brought under considerable restraint.

morals, undoubtedly gives a comparative elevation to the character of those who are reared under it. The European servants of the Company therefore, who were also held by greater responsibilities, were worthy of more confidence than transient adventurers, ignorant and barbarous, from the upper Asia. This institution was the first step towards an English provincial administration, and the remote beginning of a new system, more open to the influences of the British genius and principles.

The supervisors rendered considerable service. Their presence in the districts imposed a restraint upon the native officers, and their inquiries and interferences, whilst they evinced the wretched state of the interior, checked many evils. But they had acted only a very short time when the country began to suffer from another calamity, which in the end overwhelmed it in misery, incomparably more dreadful than all it had before endured. This was the famine that began in the year 1769, and continued through the greatest part of 1770; of which, as few circumstantial relations have been given, perhaps the following account may not be unacceptable. *A. D.* 1769 1770

The principal food of the great body of the people who inhabit our provinces, is rice. Of this, from the fertility of the soil, the joint effect of an ardent sun and of saturating periodical rains, they have annually two crops, besides a variety of other grain and pulse. The first crop of rice is gathered in about the end of August, the second (which is the greatest) early in December; and the other inferior articles from the month of February till the end of April; so that the ground brings forth almost all the year round. In general the produce is so abundant as to render Bengal the granary of India, and it is but at considerably distant intervals that a season fails. The natives indolent, improvident, fatalists, and exposed till of late to be taxed in proportion to the produce they raised, or even to have any apparent superfluity invaded, by their brethren in power, had never adopted the practice of keeping a stock of grain in case of dearth. When a season of drought therefore occurs, the sun, usually the great agent in fertility, parches the ground. Scarcity ensues; a scarcity aggravated by the eagerness which people then show to purchase rice, and by the artifices of the grain dealers, who are skilful in taking advantage of the public apprehension. If drought extended through two successive seasons, it would almost inevitably follow that the quantity of grain in the country would not be equal to the consumption of a people whose lives depend on the supply of this article; for extremity of want will not induce the Hindoos in general to resort to animal food, especially the flesh of the cow, because of the horror with which they regard an act that they are taught to believe would incur the dreadful punishment of loss of caste in this life, and torments or degrading transmigrations in the next. The periodical rains begin early in June, and continue with intermissions till late in October, commonly falling more plentifully in the two last months.

The crops of December 1768 and August 1769, were both scanty; and throughout the month of October 1769, the usual period of heavy rains, which are absolutely necessary for the latter crop of rice, hardly a drop fell. The almost total failure of a third crop, after the deficiency of the two preceding ones, filled all men with consternation and dismay. Some hope was still placed in the crops of inferior grain, usual reaped between February and April, which every endeavour was exerted to increase; but the refreshing showers that annually fall in what are called the dry months, between January and May, also failed, and in the fatal year 1770 there was scarcely any rain till late in May. The heat was insufferable, and every kind of grain or pulse then growing was in a great degree dried upon the ground. Nothing appeared but universal despondence and unavoidable destruction; for the same calamity extended to the upper India, and there was no neighbouring country that had been used to furnish Bengal with rice by sea, or that could afford an adequate supply.

The Company's administration and the native ministers early took the alarm, and entered upon such precautionary measures as were within their power. In September 1769 the English and all their dependents were absolutely prohibited from trading in rice; not because they or any other set of people were at all suspected of having been monopolizing that article, but lest on the temptation of very high prices, European influence should in any form operate to collect such undue quantities as might aggravate the scarcity. General and strict injunctions were also published against hoarding grain, buying or selling it clandestinely, or carrying on any dealings in it but at the public markets; and a stock of rice, amounting to 60,000 maunds,

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was laid in for the use of the army, a measure to which the preservation of our military power and indeed of the country may be ascribed; for it is not to be doubted that want would have made the soldiery throw off all command, and seek subsistence with their arms in their hands, which must have produced total anarchy. The prime mover in all these measures also was Mr. Becher*, resident at the Durbar.

The famine was felt in all the northern districts of Bengal as early as the month of November 1769, and before the end of April following, had spread desolation through the three provinces. Rice rose gradually to four, and at length to ten, times its usual price, but even at that rate was not to be had. Lingering multitudes were seen seeking subsistence from the leaves and bark of trees. In the country the highways and fields were strewed, in towns the streets and passages choaked, with the dying and the dead. Multitudes flocked to Moorshedabad, the capital. It became more necessary to draw supplies to that city, and no endeavour was spared to bring all the grain in the country to market. Subscriptions were set on foot. The Company, the Nabob, the Ministers, European and native individuals, contributed for feeding the poor. In Moorshedabad alone 7,000 were daily fed for several months, and the same practice was followed in other places; but the good effects were hardly discernible amidst the general devastation. In and about the capital, the mortality increased so fast, that it became necessary to keep a set of persons constantly employed in removing the dead from the streets and roads, and these unfortunate victims were placed in hundreds on rafts and floated down the river. At length the persons employed in this sad office died also, probably from the noxious effluvia they imbibed; and for a time, dogs, jackalls, and vultures were the only scavengers. It was impossible to stir abroad without breathing an offensive air, without hearing frantic cries, and seeing numbers of different ages and sexes in every stage of suffering and death. The calamity was not less in other quarters; in many places whole families, in others, the people of entire villages had expired. Even in that country there were persons who fed on forbidden and abhorred animals, nay, the child on its dead parent, the mother on her child. At length a gloomy calm succeeded. Death had ended the miseries of a great portion of the people, and when a new crop came forward in August, it had in some parts no owners. The number which fell in this period of horror has been variously estimated, and may perhaps be moderately taken at three millions.

It must be very evident from a simple review of this desolating event that it was the visitation of Heaven, not the work of man. Those Eastern countries have unhappily been too well acquainted with this species of calamity in all ages. Upon turning to the last century only, the records of the Company mention a destructive famine in Surat and the neighbouring countries about the year 1630. Dow gives an account of a prodigious one almost general in the Mogul empire, anno 1661. Instances might easily be multiplied by a more particular research; in our time, we have seen several on the Coast of Coromandel, the last of which a few years ago destroyed multitudes. Since the awful æra of 1770, there have been two seasons of great scarcity in Bengal, the years 1783 and 1788. The dearth in those years was only partial, but the common people were driven to great distress and some perished. Lord Cornwallis seeing how much the country was exposed to calamities of this sort, instituted public granaries in Bengal, in which a stock of grain should always be preserved against emergencies. Indeed if we could suppose that any man or set of men, especially European servants of the Company who had easy means of acquiring wealth, could have been so iron-hearted as to form the design of enriching themselves by with-holding sustenance from their fellow creatures, if we could suppose they could have borne the sight, even for the first week or day, of the miseries under which a whole people were sinking, if we could suppose further that after

* A man noted for his honesty and humanity; whose anxiety and exertions for alleviating the miseries of that whole period ended in an illness that almost cost him his life. Yet on his return to England he found himself traduced as the author of the famine. This calumny is said to have had its rise at the French settlement of Chandernagore, in the vicinity of which an agent of his had in the year 1769, before things came to extremity, some articles of the *provisions of the former year* selling off, and among them a parcel of rice, in value about 20,000 rupees. Perhaps the purchase of a stock of rice for the Company's troops may also have contributed to suggest the idea of a monopoly. It is from a MS. account, of which the materials were furnished by him when the event was recent, that this relation (of the facts stated in which the writer hereof was also an eye-witness) is chiefly taken.

Another gentleman, still living, was also accused of being the author of the famine, though he was in England when it commenced.

after denying every thing human for the sake of gain, they could so far forego their own object as instead of accepting a four-fold, nay ten-fold price, to allow those who would purchase, to die in immense multitudes for want; if we could entertain all these extravagant suppositions, and the equally extravagant one of a general monopoly of the produce of a great country, still a little cool reflection upon the means of accomplishing a scheme so flagitious, would show that the execution of it would be absolutely impracticable.

It is perfectly established that the dearth was general over the three provinces, and in all ruinously severe. A monopoly therefore, if that had been the cause, must have been general also. It is easy to conceive how one quarter could be deprived of its produce to supply another, but when in all quarters there was a like destitution, if we suppose this to have proceeded from monopoly, we must also suppose not a simple operation of emptying one district to fill another, still less to surcharge any other, because that would be to go from a better market to a worse one; but a local monopoly in every township, *keeping up*, not *sending away*, the grain found within its circle. Let us now enquire into the lowest quantity of grain that can be supposed to have been hoarded. In the course of twelve months, three millions of people are estimated to have died; that is, nearly one-third of the whole population; but as a third of the usual allowance of food might have preserved life, we should hence be led to conclude that the grain retailed in that year was two-thirds at least below the quantity usually vended. As, further, the failure would fall chiefly on those who in times of common plenty earned only a subsistence, and these may be computed at eight in ten of the community, the deficiency in the supply of the markets that year may well be rated at two-thirds of the usual consumption of eight millions of people, that is somewhat more than one-half of the whole quantity brought to market in ordinary times: and if this was occasioned by monopoly, so much must have been kept up. But let us assume what would be the most plausible theory, that a real scarcity, to a certain extent, was rendered severely fatal by the supervention of monopoly; of what magnitude must we conceive the monopoly to be, in order to become thus operative? Here we must go on an ample supposition; for if monopolists had thought of contenting themselves with collecting, for instance, only a month's demand at a time, their main purpose would have been defeated, because in the mean while the rest would have found a distribution in the usual way. They must therefore have bought up largely at or before the reaping of a crop, and bought up more than they withheld, because part of their purchases we must suppose would be resold. If then we admit a real scarcity which would have occasioned a mortality of a million of people, (which prejudice has never granted,) and ascribe the mortality of the other two millions who perished, to monopoly, concluding as we are obliged, that this monopoly consisted only of two great operations, that is, on the December crop of 1768, and the August crop of 1769, then the quantity of grain hoarded up will turn out to have been one-third of the market supply of ordinary years: and assigning in such years to ten millions of persons, the young and the adult taken together, half a seer (or a pound) of rice per diem, which is a moderate allowance, that third will amount to six hundred and four millions of seers, or fifteen millions of maunds; which at a rupee each, a probable purchase-price in a time of real scarcity which we here suppose, will amount to fifteen millions or a crore and a half of rupees, one half perhaps of the whole circulating medium of the provinces at that time, and such a capital in the hands of those suspected of being concerned, as no extravagance of credulity can hold to be supposable.

But we have not yet seen all the difficulties. The three provinces contain 150,000 square miles, and if we reckon fifteen square miles for the sphere of one monopoly agent, (which surely, after allowing for water, is an average full as much as he could compass,) and reckon further two assistants only to each agent, we shall have thus ten thousand monopoly stations, and thirty thousand persons employed at them. Such a set of operations, or the hundredth part of them, and operations continued through a whole year, would have furnished uncontroulable evidence to all men. The natives are indeed patient in suffering, when they think suffering inevitable; they suffered in that calamity with wonderful passiveness; but if they had traced their miseries to any source like this, the country would have soon rung with their complaints. They are known to be clamorous even on trivial occasions where any redress is possible. They have been known in a time of scarcity, merely apprehended or artificial, to have carried urgent representations against the grain dealers; they did so at the period spoken of, as long as they thought that those dealers

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secreted any grain, which according to their usual practice, they may have done, thereby unnecessarily adding to the evil. But very probably, if the people had seen that the calamities of that period proceeded from human hands, they would not have borne them; they would have helped themselves to grain; perhaps have risen upon their European masters. No, they well knew and acknowledged whence their distresses came; they foresaw them in the drought of successive seasons, a drought not confined to their provinces; and felt in them the dispensation of a superior Power. This was one of those severe inflictions of the Almighty, by which offending creatures, who forget their Maker, are reminded of his being, and of his government of the universe. Those poor people sought by superstitious observances to propitiate their deities, but they were "*Gods that could not save,*" and their votaries remained without any moral change.

The members of administration appointed from England by Parliament in 1773, a few years after the famine, with a special view to the discovery of abuses, men zealous in the execution of their trust, and free in expressing the most unfavourable opinions, never intimated the suspicion of monopoly; but always spoke of the famine as a natural evil of most destructive consequences, still visible in the country. Lord Cornwallis, if he had not judged in the same way, would not have contented himself with proposing only the simple preventive of an establishment for storing part of the surplus produce of plentiful years. Yet wonderful to consider, without any proof, without investigation, without one well authenticated adequate fact, the belief of a monopoly by some servants of the India Company has been, and perhaps may still be, very general in the western world. The French of Chandernagore, like the rest of that nation, too ready to blacken the British conduct in India, are accused, and with apparent reason, of being the authors of this tale. From Chandernagore it first passed to Calcutta, and from these places it was then transmitted to Paris, to London, and to all Europe. It has been registered as truth in the page of history, has been the public subject of religious lamentation, has been embalmed in verse, and still remains such a foul stain upon the British character, as the annals of any people can hardly parallel. Such is the power of credulity. In this case it not only "gave to airy "nothing a local habitation and a name," but it ascribed to a phantom, effects, which had that phantom been a reality, it was incapable of producing. Nothing short of an absolute want of a sufficient stock of food in the country, could have occasioned so dreadful a devastation of the human race. The whole idea of a monopoly of any kind or degree, (unless such a natural aggravation of real scarcity as the eagerness of the people to lay in some store, and the retention of native grain dealers may have created,) the present writer, himself an eye-witness of that dire calamity, and with particular means of information, most assuredly believes to be without foundation, and to have originated in calumny or in error. This testimony, due to truth and to the British character, he is able deliberately and conscientiously to deliver; and though his main design may not have called for so full an exposition of a collateral subject, yet since the current of time swiftly removes the opportunities of giving and receiving information, he hopes he shall be pardoned in availing himself of the present occasion, to perform what he thinks an act of justice and of duty.

A. D. 1772 The subject of territorial administration shall now be continued. In 1772 the principle of sending English supervisors into the districts, considered here as introducing a third period, was enlarged by a very important measure which completed the change begun in the adoption of that principle. The Company stood forth as *Dewan:* hitherto the office continued to be executed by native ministers who resided at Moorshedabad, the old seat of government and of the public Exchequer. These ministers, with the officers whom they employed in the districts, were now laid aside, and the Company by the agency of their own servants, took upon themselves the entire care and collection of the revenues. The Governor and Council with their former controlling power, joined that of cognizance and executive management, which had been till then vested in those ministers. They removed the ostensible seat of Government and of the Exchequer to Calcutta, the principal English settlement; they divided the three provinces into collectorships, and stationed an European servant of the Company in each of those divisions as collector.

This change threw also the judicial administration of the country in civil affairs, into the hands of the English. Under the government which the Mahomedans had for many centuries maintained in Bengal, they established also their own system of laws, and it was the standard of decision in all cases civil and criminal, exclusive of those

those between Hindoos, which were determined by the code of that people. The Nazim, or ruler, in person executed the office of supreme criminal judge. By deputy he also administered in the principal civil court appointed for the cognizance of all matters of property, excepting claims of land and inheritance, which fell within a third department called the *Dewanmee Adawlet*, or Court of the Dewan, to whom as the Emperor's officer for the collection of the revenues, all causes relating to the details of that extensive province, and particularly to property in land, were referred. From the time of the Company's accession to the office of Dewan, the authority of the Dewannee Court naturally enough encreased, till at length it became in effect, the sole tribunal for civil suits. In this state, as appertaining to the department of the revenues, it fell into the charge of the Company's servants when they assumed the executive management of that branch; and they immediately proceeded to make various regulations and improvements in the administration of civil justice. They appointed a Provincial Dewannee Court in every collectorship, over which the English collector was to preside; they even modified, in some respects, the administration of criminal justice, which was peculiarly the province of the Nabob; appointing inferior criminal courts in the districts, and subjecting them, as well as the principal criminal court, to English superintendence. Thus every interposing medium between the English and their Indian subjects was removed; they came then to transact immediately with each other. The direct authority of the English pervaded the interior of the provinces, and the *Native* or *Country Government*, saving only the prerogative of the Nabob as chief criminal magistrate, was in form and in fact done away.

Many obstacles to good government were dissipated by this change. The English administration entered upon their new functions with a tone of intelligence and vigour. Besides introducing more method and order into the conduct of the public business, they set themselves to correct some of the most prominent of those abuses by which the country had been so long oppressed. In collecting the revenue for instance from the ryots or husbandmen, there was no fixed standard. Agreements did indeed pass between the landholders and their tenants at the beginning of the year (for their leases extended only to one year), but as before hinted, those agreements were commonly broken by the stronger party upon a thousand pretences, of which the superior made himself the judge, and this practice opened a door of exaction to every subordinate officer of the revenue. Hence the people never knowing what portion of the produce of their labour would be left to them, were not only impoverished but discouraged from exertion.

Exactions still more scandalous were practised in the judicial courts. The *Phousdary*, or criminal court, raised a revenue by the imposition of fines upon crimes and misdemeanors tried before it, having thus a direct interest in the multiplication of accusations, and in finding the accused guilty. The government of 1772 styles its exactions, "detestable and unauthorized, but yet imitated by every farmer and "aumil in the province."

The *Dewannee*, or civil court, in like manner, wherever it could, had recourse to heavy arbitrary fines. Things however *sanctioned by the native government* even down to the period now spoken of, may give a more striking idea of the state of the country. In law concerns the civil courts were allowed to take a commission, sometimes amounting to one-fourth, upon the sums recovered on their awards; in the revenue, the inhabitants of a town or district, however reduced in number, were obliged to make up the assessment at which that division had been rated by government, that is, to pay the rents of those who were dead or fled, as well as their own. This principle, which must surprise persons unacquainted with that country, was acted upon even after the famine; and the greatest wonder is, how the people could subsist under such accumulated barbarous impositions.

The English government of 1772, appears to have set out in the sincere desire of alleviating the sufferings of that people. But the first great financial measure which they adopted, produced most unhappy effects. In opposition to the annual leases, which were certainly very exceptionable, the idea of farming the lands for long terms of years had been frequently suggested, and came at length to be regarded as a remedy for many existing evils. Sufficient attention however was not paid to the wide distinction which exists between the landholder having an interest in the soil, and the revenue farmer, whose principal object it must ever be not to consider the permanent

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welfare of a district or an estate, but the best return he can draw from it within the term of his engagement. The desire of keeping up the collections as near as possible to their former standard, still haunted the councils of the Directors at home and of the servants abroad. Under the idea that there were hidden resources in the country, (which might be so far justified, that early subductions and alienations had been made from the exchequer lands, but the resumption of them was become extremely difficult, whilst the general circumstances of the country had decayed,) and in the view of uniting increase of revenue with ease to the people, it was determined to lease the lands of Bengal on farm for five years; and that their utmost value might be ascertained, these farms were put up to public auction. Calcutta banians, money dealers, and adventurers, were among the highest bidders. The country was hence given into their hands, under a positive condition indeed for the equitable treatment of the occupants of the soil; but the ancient usage of collecting the instalment of the month, within the month, was still followed by the farmers; and if there was any interference with even the most violent exercise of their authority, they had to plead the impossibility of realizing the revenue and making good their engagements. The English collectors, afraid perhaps of having a failure in the revenue ascribed to them, were seldom willing to interpose except in flagrant cases; and the poor people preferring often the first loss to subsequent litigations, or wearied out by the protractions of the other party, had little redress. At the end of five years, an immense balance of the stipulated revenue was due by the farmers, and the country having been in effect delivered again into the hands of natives, still continued to suffer.

It has been said in favour of the English government, that under it, and even within the period of which we now treat, Bengal has enjoyed a tranquillity from hostile assaults and commotions, rarely experienced under its former masters. But though little disposed to panegyrize Mahomedan governments, we must observe, that this comparison can hardly be meant to extend to the times anterior to the dismemberment of the Mogul Empire. The usurpation of Aliverdi Khan, who waded to power through perfidy and blood*, provoked the court of Delhi to encourage an invasion of the country by the Mharattas, and for several years they harassed the districts west of the Ganges, the far larger divisions on the eastern side of that river remaining all the time perfectly safe. But from the establishment of Aurungzebe on the imperial throne, until the invasion of Nadir Shaw, a period of eighty years, Bengal enjoyed profound peace without, and experienced only few, and these transient disturbances, within.

If however, a comparison of this kind is to be instituted, it must be carried much further. Under the government of the last two regular viceroys, Jaffier Khan, and Shujah Khan, who ruled in succession near forty years†, the state of the country was eminently flourishing, and is yet a subject of celebrity. Jaffier Khan indeed appears to have been culpably as well as unnecessarily severe in inflicting personal punishments upon the zemindars, and this part of his conduct has brought reproach upon his memory; but he strenuously protected the common people, and most ably administered the affairs of the soubah. His successor is represented to have been a man singularly beneficent and humane. Under both, the taxes were little felt, and in the time of the latter, though the annual tribute remitted to Delhi was usually a crore of rupees, local collectors were seldom requisite, the zemindars paying their rents immediately into the royal treasury. Even after the usurpation of Aliverdi Khan, that class of persons was so opulent, as at one time to give him a donation of a crore of rupees, and at another time fifty lacs, towards defraying his extraordinary expences in repelling the Mharattas. The general power and authority of the empire were a protection to this dependency of it; its military force, especially during the long administration of Jaffier Khan, was inconsiderable, its civil administration simple and economical, and it had no separate political relations to maintain with neighbouring or foreign countries. Easy, in short, in its finances, moderate in its expenditure, and free from the state, the charges, and cares of independent dominion, its inhabitants enjoyed in the occupations of agriculture and commerce, public peace and abundance. Under the violent assumption of Aliverdi Khan, its connections of a political nature were

* *A. D.* 1741.

† Sujah Khan died in 1739, and was succeeded by his son Sirfaraz Khan, who was deposed and slain by Aliverdi Khan in 1741. Aliverdi Khan possessed the government fifteen years, and was succeeded in 1756 by his grandson Surajah Dowlah, who was deprived of the musnud and his life in consequence of the battle of Plassey, anno 1757; so that from the death of Shujah Khan to the ascendency of the English power, was only eighteen years.

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were still very limited, for it had nothing to fear from its neighbours, except on the western side, and he seems never to have cast an ambitious view beyond the provinces which he wrested from the family of his ancient master. But Bengal, as held by us, possesses the rank of a sovereign state; it is the head member of an empire whose parts are remotely separate from each other, and intermix with the territories of several powerful princes; it contributes to the support and defence of the other divisions of British Asia; and supposing its system of foreign policy to be entirely pacific, it is liable to be affected at so many points, that the government of it requires far greater resources than were necessary when it was merely a dependent province. The tribute then which it pays to us, being at least equal to what the Mogul Emperors derived from it, and neither its population nor produce, as we have already found reason to conclude, greater than in their time, it will follow that the inhabitants must now be more highly assessed than they were under their former rulers, not excepting even the usurpers. And if this state should pursue plans of offensive policy towards its neighbours, it might multiply beyond calculation its exigencies and dangers, and thus aggravate still more the disparity between its actual and preceding situation. It is indeed possible, as has been already observed, to render the country happier under our government than it ever was before; but after it had experienced so many convulsions, we need hardly look even for an equality, in the earlier unsettled stages of our management.

The time of which we now speak may be called a period of experiment. It is evident that with respect to the revenues, on the due regulation of which the ease of the people so much depended, the great desideratum was to fix a just standard for their amount, and to provide for the certain unoppressive realization of that amount. This was soon perceived; but there were various opinions concerning the best mode of attaining that, in the propriety of which all agreed, and whilst discussions were continued, current exigencies frequently decided. It can be no presumption to assert, that our first and main duty then was to establish a just and comprehensive system of domestic policy, to cherish our subjects, promote internal improvement, and according to the maxim recommended, and thence dignified, by Lord Clive, "to cultivate our garden."

The remote distance of the supreme directive seat of our authority was an obstacle to the settlement of wise plans of internal government. Persons at home could seldom act but upon transmitted information. Distrust produced hesitation. The constitution of the Company left the executive body without sufficient controul, and divisions weakened its energy. Official changes, both here and abroad, interrupted the progress of measures, and though the objects which ought to be pursued were understood, there was still uncertainty as to the sacrifices which might be hazarded in new attempts.

Such considerations as these may, probably, among others, have produced the legislative interference of 1773; by which a new constitution was given to the government of Bengal, and a majority of the members which were to compose it, sent from England, the rest being selected from the former administration. *A. D. 1773.*

Whatever may be the views which the conviction of the writer has led him to entertain of the affairs of this period, he will surely be pardoned in wishing to avoid, as far as can possibly consist with any fairness to his subject, the introduction of controversial topics, always unpleasant, upon an occasion like the present. Where he is led to notice events which come within that description, his aim will be to consider them, not with relation to the motives which may have produced them, or their intrinsic character, but to their influence upon the condition of the people of our eastern dominions, and as articles of a national account, between those possessions and this country. Instead then, of entering into the merits of the contests which soon arose in the new government of Bengal, we may be allowed to remark, that however well intended the institution of that government might be, it was at first unhappily compounded. Only upon the supposition of a coincidence of opinions respecting past as well as present measures, which from the circumstances of that institution seems not to have been expected, could dissentions have been thought avoidable; and if they should arise, as may more particularly have been apprehended, concerning former acts, a disapprobation of which must implicate the credit both of the preceding administration, and of those connected with it, a divided government and state were naturally to be looked for. That these consequences, proceeding from criminatory retrospections, and the utmost discordance of opinion upon various important ques-

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tions, did soon follow, is well known. And they produced unhappy effects upon the administration of affairs, upon the European service of the Company, and upon the people. The relief of the country was still suspended; and the failure of the first great measure adopted at home for this end, may have prevented a progress to others of executive and official regulation, probably at that time seen to be requisite, and subsequently included in the parliamentary provisions of 1784. Into the subjects of these we forbear to enter, although after all the candour and discrimination which would be solicitously exercised in treating of them, doubtless they would be found to discover a distinct source of pressure upon the country.

Hitherto, from the period of the revolution in 1757, we have not seen the English, on the side of Bengal, engaging in any offensive alliances or wars with the neighbouring country powers. The system recommended by Lord Clive and inculcated by the Company, was, to avoid schemes of conquest, and political intrigues with the native princes, improving our domestic state, and making ourselves respected for our moderation and good faith. Upon these principles, his Lordship and his Select Committee * had the magnanimity to restore to Shujah Dowlah the dominion of Oude, after victory had chastised an unprovoked aggression of that prince, and made
A. D. 1774. us the arbiters of his fate †. A deviation from this system began in 1774, having professedly for one object, the pecuniary advantage of the Company; and a much
A. D. 1778. wider departure from it was made in 1778, by carrying offensive war, with a view to the acquisition of territory, into the west of India. The long duration, the external effects, and the issue of this war, are sufficiently known. At home it plunged the government into a sea of military and political cares, that left little time or opportunity for the study and application of those protecting cherishing measures, which the state of the country required; it incurred an enormous expense, a heavy load of debt; and, when the public resources were greatly exhausted, to all these evils succeeded the attacks of Hyder Ali in the Carnatic, and a defensive war against him and the French, the support of which chiefly fell upon Bengal.

Such were the necessities to which our affairs were then reduced, that although we had before acquired a very forbidding experience of the farming system, a temporary recourse was again had to it in several districts, some of which were swept by the renters with a rigour that became afterwards a subject of public inquisition. Thus, notwithstanding the useful regulations begun in 1772, through errors or defects in carrying the designs then adopted into execution, through the effects of intestine divisions, fluctuating counsels, foreign wars, and real or conceived exigencies of government, added to its common cares, a series of twelve years past without the application of any effectual relief to the state of the country, without acting steadily and systematically upon the acknowledged necessity of fixing on just principles the extent of our demand upon the territorial possessions, and giving the people, once for all, rest and exemption from every species of arbitrary taxation.

About this time the legislature again interposed. The parliamentary regulations
A. D. 1784. of 1784 went upon principles well adapted to the correction of the evils which prevailed in our Indian governments and possessions, and to the invigoration of the authority of the home administration over them. If they established a new power in giving the state a controul respecting the affairs of India, they established new responsibility. But after all, it is to be acknowledged, that whatever laws may be enacted for the government of those distant dependencies, inhabited by a people so dissimilar to the European nations, the efficacy of those laws must ever essentially depend on the character of the persons to whom the execution of them is entrusted ‡.

The

* Consisting of Messrs. Sumner, Carnac, Verelst, and Sykes.

† In 1764. A time may perhaps come when it will seem less extravagant than it might now be thought, to insinuate, that it had possibly been well for us, notwithstanding the private wealth and even public subsidies derived from our connection with Oude, if we had to the present day adhered to the general spirit of Lord Clive's policy. The late war with Tippoo was a forced departure from the pacific system, and the ambition and perfidy of Indian powers may possibly expose us to new necessities of the same kind, until they are taught a better conduct, by our continued superiority and moderation. But this probable necessity of extending our conquests is one of the disadvantages attaching to our dominion in Hindostan, for the wider it spreads the more vulnerable we become. It was the unwieldiness of the Mogul Empire that accelerated its fall; the loss of distant provinces being the rise of new enemies, and loss of reputation also.

‡ If the sole object of this review were not to treat of measures immediately affecting the natives, an economical retrenchment made at this time in the different departments of the Bengal government, under Sir John Macpherson, would deserve to be introduced here with applause.

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Commencing in 1786.

The fourth and last period of which it was intended to speak was now approaching, and brought with it a great and happy change for the natives of Bengal. Under the auspices of the parliamentary system just alluded to, administered at home with enlarged and upright views, and seconded abroad by the excellent conduct of Lord Cornwallis, the objects till then ineffectually proposed, have been fully attained. A new constitution has been established for the land tenures of Bengal, whereby hereditary property in them is secured, the tax payable by the proprietors to government is equitably and unalterably settled, industry and improvement are hence encouraged, and provision is made for the extension of the same encouragement, the same enjoyment of rights, to every inferior occupant of the soil. This is in effect the foundation of a constitution for the country, because the government is bound by it as well as the subject. Very essential reforms have also been made by his Lordship in the administration of justice. The office of supreme criminal judge remained still vested in the Nabob, represented by some Mussulman delegate, by whom the inferior courts were filled with mean retainers of his own, who paid for their places. Nothing can be conceived more defective, oppressive, and scandalous, than the administration of these persons. The country groaned under it, the government was reproached by it, yet reluctant to touch the remaining prerogative of the Nabob, it endured this evil long; but seeing no other measures of reform could prosper whilst such a source of flagrant abuse was tolerated, the good of the people at length absolutely demanded an interference, and the Nabob appointed the Company his delegates in the office of supreme criminal judge. The Governor General and Members of Council then took upon themselves the execution of this office. The chief criminal court was removed to Calcutta, the collectors in the districts were invested with the powers of magistracy, for the apprehension and confinement of delinquents. Courts of circuit for the trial of criminals were established in the principal divisions of the country, and filled with English judges selected from the most experienced of the servants of the Company. In a word, this great department, which was before made up of the vilest perversions of legal power, was composed anew, and filled with men of principle and ability, placed under the strongest responsibilities, and acting upon a system which was to carry the inspection and the dispensation of the laws regularly into every section of the country. Even Europeans in the districts were subjected to the authority of the provincial laws, and in civil affairs the Dewannee Court, properly so called, that is the court of the collector for the trial of revenue causes, was abolished: that officer was no longer allowed to judge where he was a party; but all revenue cases, as well as other civil suits, were to be referred to the civil judge of the district, who was to have no concern with the collections, but to be employed solely in the administration of justice; whereby delay in decisions, the consequence of divided attention, and a grievance almost equal to a denial of justice, would be prevented. To his court also, the commercial agents of the Company, who had been, in consideration of the nature of their business, exempted in some degree from the ordinary routine of court processes, were henceforth regularly to refer all matters of litigation occurring within their departments. The law, in a word, is now made the arbiter in all matters of property, even between the government and its subjects*. With regard to the rules by which justice was to be administered, the Hindoo and Mahomedan codes were in general to be the standard for the respective subjects of them, but tempered, in some instances where they are barbarous

* It is to be remembered, that nothing said here or elsewhere in this treatise respecting the administration of justice, has relation to the *Supreme Court of Judicature*, established by his Majesty at Fort William. That tribunal seems to have been instituted with two views; the first to answer more effectually the purposes for which the municipal court, called the *Mayor's Court*, had been established at Calcutta in the merely commercial times of the Company, namely, to administer justice to British subjects, and to all persons living under the British flag; the second to answer another purpose, which the acquisition of territory was thought to have rendered necessary, the affording of an asylum to the natives of the acquired provinces who might be aggrieved by the English. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court therefore, now extends over all British-born subjects residing within the provinces, for all acts done by them against each other or against natives; it extends over some of the immediate native dependents of the English, and over such other natives as may by voluntary agreement, in any case submit themselves to it; and it extends also over all persons, of whatever nation, living within the limits of the English flag, as they were defined prior to our acquisition of territorial possessions. But the Judicial Courts, which the Mogul Emperors had established in those possessions, were continued after the transfer to the Company, and the regulation and controul of those Courts are now vested in the British government of Bengal, independent of the Supreme Court of Judicature; over them that Court has no power; to them only the natives of the provinces, not in the service of the English, that is to say, the great body of the people, are amenable, and it is of them only, and of the reforms made in them, that we all along here treat.

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barbarous and cruel, by the mildness of British sentiments, and improved in others *which have relation to objects of political economy.* "*These codes,*" says Lord Cornwallis *in his minute introductory of this great reform,* "are *still* in force, as far "as regards religious tenets, marriage, caste, inheritance, and some other points."

Thus by the measures of his Lordship's administration, important rights of property, never before enjoyed, and a meliorated legal constitution, really adequate to the protection of those rights, have been conferred upon our Asiatic subjects in Bengal.

Nor are these the only grand events by which the government of Lord Cornwallis has been marked as a providential blessing, and has become an epoch to that country. He has given a new tone, a new principle of purity and vigour to the British administration there; order and economy, integrity and zeal, pervade all its departments; for, exhibiting in his own conduct an example of equity on the part of government, he has been solicitous that all inferior authorities should follow it; and no where, it may be safely affirmed, throughout his Majesty's dominions, has public business been transacted, so far as the civil servants of the Company are concerned, with more public principle than in Bengal, under the influence of the spirit and the conduct of that illustrious nobleman. Distinguished among many other valuable qualities by good sense and magnanimity, which enable him with ease to meet the most trying exigencies, yet capable of descending to the smallest concerns, acquainted himself with all affairs and with the officers employed in them; by his intelligence and the uprightness of his own character he has overawed corruption, and by kind conciliating manners, flowing from a generous and modest mind, has produced, in the midst of a system of reform, attachment both to himself and to that system.

It would be easy and gratifying, if it came within the scope of this essay, to dilate upon other parts of his Lordship's character; his justice and good faith towards the Indian powers, his atchievements in war, and his moderation in victory: but it may suffice to say, that whether we look to his internal administration or to his foreign policy, to his talents for civil government or for military affairs, to his conduct towards the Natives or Europeans, towards enemies or friends, we must rejoice that such an example of character, and of British character, has been displayed to the inhabitants of the East. Let it not then be imagined that any remarks which are made in the following pages are intended to derogate, or can justly be conceived to derogate from the merit of his administration. Even had there been any grounds which could give colour to such an attempt, one who can neither speak of his government, nor of himself without sentiments of respect and attachment, would have been among the last to engage in it.

It will now be fit to advert to the other Indian possessions held by the Company in full property; and after what has been said, a very brief notice of their state will be sufficient. Benares, which is completely incorporated with our dominions on the Ganges, has received the full benefits of the improvements made in Bengal. The Northern Circars have continued, until very lately, in a situation similar to that of Bengal under the second period of our management, and have suffered extremely from the mal-administration of the natives. The Bengal system, as nearly as it can be adapted to them, is, we understand, intended to be established in them and in the Company's jaghire lands, which have been more under European inspection. The same system, we may presume, will also, as speedily as possible, be extended to our newly acquired lands in the Carnatic and on the Malabar Coast.

If after this review, in which it will not be asserted that any excess of colouring has been employed, we proceed to form an estimate of the general effect of our early conquests, upon the state of the countries and the happiness of the subjects acquired by them, however we may be inclined to avoid censuring individuals, we can hardly fail, on the whole, to admit some humiliating conclusions. The history of our rule in Bengal is in great part a history of our own errors, or of the abuses public and private of power derived from us; and the brightest portion of our administration there, is that which has been employed in applying remedies to the political diseases, which either have arisen, or become more inveterate, in the country, in our time. Our accession to the government of it has been productive of prodigious changes; and if we take the result of them for thirty years together, from the elevation of Mhir Jaffier, we shall be compelled to allow, that at the end of that long period, the country and the people were not in so good a condition as that in which we found them. Doubtless the ravages of the famine greatly reduced the cultivation for a time,

time, as well as the number of inhabitants, which will account for a decrease of the national revenue, but not for decay in the circumstances of surviving individuals, either of the poorer sort or middle classes; because the natural effect of great depopulation was rather to enhance the value of labour and lessen the cost of subsistence, as also to leave the field of traffic in fewer hands.

Persons who remember the state of the country in the beginning of 1769 and in 1787, (the thirtieth year of the revolution,) think that it exhibited more appearance of opulence at the former period than at the latter; and it is clearly acknowledged in the Bengal records, not only that the country declined considerably in the twelve years anterior to 1769, but that various causes of its decline continued to operate after the calamity of the famine, though perhaps with less activity*. It will likewise be granted, that the wars in which we were engaged subsequent to that event, were unfavourable to internal prosperity, and whatever may be urged in vindication of our governments, as to the grounds on which they were undertaken, yet with respect to wars of offence, not even a remote necessity or interest of the people of Bengal, can be pleaded for making that people parties in them.

But exclusive of all local mismanagement, the nature of that subjection in which Bengal is placed to this country, will alone account for a wonderful change in its internal state. All the offices of trust, civil and military, and the first lines of commerce, are in the hands of foreigners, who after a temporary residence remove with their acquisitions in constant succession. The government is foreign. Of *native* rulers, even the *rapacious* exactions went again into circulation, and the tribute formerly paid to Delhi, passing chiefly by the medium of private commerce, when a general communication throughout the empire gave Bengal great advantages, was little felt. But the tribute paid to us extracts every year a large portion of the produce of that country without the least return. It may not perhaps be too much to say, that in the thirty years following the acquisition of the Bengal provinces, this nation, by public and private channels, derived from them alone, exclusive of its other Eastern dependencies and of the profits of goods remitted, fifty millions sterling.

These observations and the review which precedes them, are intended forcibly to impress upon the mind, the sense of those peculiar obligations under which we lie to the people of our Asitaic territories, on account of the benefits we draw from them, the disadvantages they have suffered, and must still in certain ways suffer from their connection with us, and the relation in which they stand to us as our subjects. True, we have corrected abuses in the internal government of these possessions, we have encouraged our Hindoo subjects, we have at length given to them the secure enjoyment of property, both inherited and acquired. All these events were most desirable and important, and to accomplish them was a work singularly arduous. But does nothing further remain to be done? In decreeing that our subjects shall be delivered from oppression and injustice, in setting an equitable limit to our own demands, and in establishing rights of property never well ascertained nor respected before; have we done all that the circumstances of the Hindoos require, all that is incumbent upon us as rulers? That by many this inquiry has not been seriously made, nor our obligations deeply considered, may be ascribed to several causes. There is a description of persons to whom the whole subject of India is confused and obscure. They know not what to believe or conclude; and a few there have been, who with very good meaning have thought of eluding all difficulties by giving back our territories to the natives, not reflecting that we should thus abandon them to new distractions, to adventurers of less pretensions than ourselves, and most probably to a rival European power. No, we cannot now renounce them without guilt, though we may also contract great guilt in the government of them.

It was long before our acquisitions in India, even those provinces which we professedly held in perpetuity, came to be regarded here as permanently our own. A secret idea of their insecurity prevailed, and our conduct towards them was perhaps influenced by this apprehension. We were eager to acquire, but slow to cherish. A better acquaintance with their natural and political advantages, and the experience of thirty years passed under trying vicissitudes, have now established an opinion,

* See the letters of Governor Verelst and Mr. Beecher, in 1769, in the Appendix to Verelst's View of Bengal; in Mr. Francis's Original Minutes, page 100; and Bolt's Considerations, Vol. III. page 199. See also Lord Cornwallis's Letter to the Court of Directors of August 2d, 1789.

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opinion, not only of the practicability of maintaining them, but with many, a confidence approaching to presumption that they cannot be lost. Were we indeed to become secure in this notion, it would be one of our greatest dangers. We are no doubt internally strong, especially in Bengal, and whilst we retain our superiority at sea, we have a peculiar and essential advantage over all enemies, European or Indian. But we ought still to remember that Hindostan is the region of revolutions. A few more successful turns in Benares on the part of so inferior a chief as Cheyte Sing*, would have put all Bengal in commotion. We ought also to remember how much the authority of a handful of strangers depends on *opinion*. To reduce the sources of prejudice against us, and to multiply impressions favourable to us, by assimilating our subjects to our modes of thinking, and by making them happy, and teaching them to understand and value the principles of the people who confer happiness upon them, may be some of the surest means of preserving the footing we have acquired. Under the influence of their original notions, it is impossible they can regard any foreign yoke with a greater degree of predilection than may arise from their deeming it preferable to some other foreign one.

It is indeed no uncommon idea among us, that our only duty towards our Hindoo subjects is to protect them from oppression, and that doing this, the more we "leave them to themselves" the better. But to evince that this vague hypothesis, like some others which have a currency on Indian subjects, must have been hastily adopted from its show, without serious examination, it may be sufficient to observe, that the code of the Hindoos, which they regard as divine, and which establishes not only principles but a multitude of positive minute laws, all held to be immutable, has received no addition for many ages; and as in all societies and affairs of men, the course of time must produce many changes, many new circumstances and combinations, which will require a succession of legal provisions, a code formed in an early stage of society in many respects rude, can never be adequate to the exigencies of all future generations. "These codes," (the Hindoo and Mahomedan) says Lord Cornwallis in the minute before quoted, "are in many respects inapplicable "to the internal government of the country." The Institutes of Menu seem to leave a latitude to the sovereign (who was to be of the kheteree or military caste), with the advice of his Brahmins, to make new regulations according to occurrent necessities. But the Hindoos with whom we have chiefly to do, have had no sovereign of their own faith for many centuries; nor is it to be supposed that their original code has hitherto proved sufficient, even in causes between parties; for the institutions, or personal decisions of their Mahomedan conquerors, must have superseded an appeal to it in many cases. And there is reason to believe that the Hindoo rajahs, whom those conquerors found in possession of the provinces which had before formed a Hindoo empire, as lately they formed the empire of the Moguls, dispensed justice in cases not provided for by the code, according to their own discretion, by a summary verbal process and decision; a practice† not unusual with rulers in Hindostan, which tended however to derogate from the dignity of the courts of justice, and may account in part for our meeting with no ancient judicial records or precedents. From these considerations then it may be concluded, that when the state of society among the Hindoos calls for any new provision, it must be proper and even necessary for us to interfere.

But not to pursue these incidental discussions, since we treat our Indian possessions as permanent and consolidated parts of the British empire, and the impolicy of governing them on any other principle, even if the tenure were uncertain, is well understood, doubtless we stand charged with the duties resulting from a permanent relation: and surely a relation of so serious a nature cannot fail to be productive of numerous duties. It must involve in it various points highly important to the happiness of our subjects, and therefore various corresponding obligations.

If we have appropriated those territories in perpetuity to ourselves, if we have assumed the sovereign dominion of them, if we apply a large portion of their annual produce to the use of Great Britain, if we are avowedly resolved to maintain our possession by arms against all pretensions, foreign or local; if by these measures, as well as by specific declarations, we show that we regard the inhabitants as exclusively and absolutely our subjects,—all the duties of rulers must be incumbent upon us.

We

* *A. D.* 1781.

† The Brahmins, in countries under foreign rulers, are often made referees; but from their general character are little competent, excepting in cases respecting caste.

We are not only concerned to free the people placed under our dominion from evils connected with taxation, such as feudal oppressions and official abuses, which may be termed extraneous grievances, but to look into evils and disorders which arise among themselves, which prevail in their society, and destroy their peace; to enact and enforce wholesome laws for their internal regulation, and in a word, with the affection of a wise and good superior, sedulously to watch over their civil and social happiness. No laboured argument drawn from the nature of government, is necessary to prove this position; the consideration which has been just adverted to, seems naturally to establish it; nor could it ever suit the principles of this nation to hold the Hindoos under its power as slaves, whose labours are exacted without a due return of benefits. Besides, such a system would soon defeat its own end, by reducing the value of the subjugated country. It is a truth perfectly obvious, that our own interest recommends the happiness of that people. The primary object of Great Britain, let it be acknowledged, was rather to discover what could be obtained from her Asiatic subjects, than how they could be benefited. In process of time it was found expedient to examine how they might be benefited, in order that we might continue to hold the advantages which we at first derived from them; and now when we have wisely and for ever fixed a limit to our demand upon them, duty calls upon us to accomplish the remainder of our progressive work, and to exert that solicitude for the gradual improvement of their condition in all points wherein it is still capable of amendment, which is due to them as useful subjects and as fellow creatures, whose happiness is committed to our care.

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To elucidate some of those points which thus demand our attention, and to suggest such means of melioration as we may with safety use, is the design of the ensuing pages; in which the method of proceeding shall be; first, to give a view of the present state of our Hindoo subjects with respect to society and morals, illustrated by authentic documents; secondly, to enquire into the causes which have produced that state; and thirdly, to propose remedies for the evils of it, with answers to such objections as are likely to be made to the plan which shall thus be offered to consideration.

CHAP. II.

View of the State of Society among the Hindoo *Subjects of* Great Britain, *particularly with respect to Morals.*

IN prosecuting the proposed inquiry, the state of society and manners among the people of Hindostan, and more particularly among those who inhabit our territories, becomes in the first place a special object of attention. It is an object which perhaps has never yet received that distinct and particular consideration, to which from its importance in a political and moral view, it is entitled.

CHAP. II. *View of the Morals of the Hindoo Subjects of Great Britain.*

It has suited the views of some philosophers to represent that people as amiable and respectable; and a few late travellers have chosen rather to place some softer traits of their characters in an engaging light, than to give a just delineation of the whole. The generality however of those who have written concerning Hindostan, appear to have concurred in affirming what foreign residents there have as generally thought, nay, what the natives themselves freely acknowledge of each other, that they are a people exceedingly depraved.

In proportion as we have become better acquainted with them, we have found this description applicable, in a sense beyond the conception even of former travellers. The writer of this paper, after spending many years in India, and a considerable portion of them in the interior of our provinces, inhabited almost entirely by natives, towards whom whilst acknowledging his views of their general character, he always lived in habits of good will, is obliged to add his testimony to all preceding evidence, and to avow that they exhibit human nature in a very degraded humiliating state, and are at once, objects of disesteem and of commiseration. Discriminations in so vast a body as the whole Hindoo people, there must be; though the general features are very similar.

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Among that people, the natives of Bengal rank low; and these as best known and forming the largest division of our Asiatic subjects, are held more particularly in view in this essay. The Mahomedans who are mixed with them, may, in regard to manners and morals, often be comprehended under the same observations; but something distinct shall afterwards be subjoined concerning them.

Of the Bengaleze then, it is true most generally that they are destitute, to a wonderful degree, of those qualities which are requisite to the security and comfort of society. They want truth, honesty, and good faith, in an extreme, of which European society furnishes no example. In Europe those principles are the standard of character and credit; men who have them not are still solicitous to maintain the reputation of them, and those who are known to be devoid of them sink into contempt. It is not so in Bengal. The qualities themselves are so generally gone, that men do not found their pretension in society upon them; they take no pains to acquire or to keep up the credit of possessing them. Those virtues are not the tests by which connections and associations are regulated; nor does the absence of them, however plain and notorious, greatly lower any one in public estimation, nor strip him of his acquaintance. Want of veracity especially, is so habitual, that if a man has truth to defend, he will hardly fail to recur to falshood for its support. In matters of interest, the use of lying seems so natural, that it gives no provocation, it is treated as an excusable indulgence, a mode of proceeding from which general toleration has taken away offence, and the practice of cheating, pilfering, tricking, and imposing, in the ordinary transactions of life are so common, that the Hindoos seem to regard them as they do natural evils, against which they will defend themselves as well as they can, but at which it would be idle to be angry. Very flagrant breaches of truth and honesty pass without any deep or lasting stain. The scandalous conduct of Tippoo, in recently denying to Lord Cornwallis, in the face of the world, the existence of that capitulation* which he had shamefully broken, was merely an example of the manners of the country, where such things occur in common life every day.

In the worst parts of Europe, there are no doubt great numbers of men who are sincere, upright, and conscientious. In Bengal, a man of real veracity and integrity is a great phenomenon; *one conscientious in the whole of his conduct*, it is to be feared, is an unknown character. Every where in this quarter of the globe, there is still much generous trust and confidence, and men are surprised when they find themselves deceived. In Bengal, distrust is awake in all transactions; bargains and agreements are made with mutual apprehensions of breach of faith, conditions and securities are multiplied, and failure in them excites little or no surprise.

A serious proposal made to a native, that he should be guided in all his intercourses and dealings by the principles of truth and justice, would be regarded as weak and impracticable. "Do you know," he would reply, "the character of all those with "whom I have to act? How can I subsist if I take advantage of nobody, while "every person takes advantage of me?" Frauds, deceptions, evasions, and procrastinations, in every line of life, in all professions, perpetually occur, and forgeries also are often resorted to with little scruple.

If confidence is from necessity or credulity at any time reposed, it is considered by the other party as the season of harvest. Few will omit to seize such an opportunity of profit. The chief agent or steward of a landholder or of a merchant, will commonly endeavour to transfer to himself what he can gradually purloin of the property and the influence of his principal; this agent is in the mean time preyed upon in a similar way, though on a smaller scale, by his dependents, especially if prosperity has rendered him less vigilant. But suppose him, by a slow, silent, and systematic pursuit, to have accumulated a large fortune, and to leave it on his death to his son; the son, rich and indolent, is in turn imperceptibly fleeced by his domestic.

Menial servants who have been long in place, and have even evinced a real attachment to their masters, are nevertheless in the habitual practice of pilfering from them. If a nephew is entrusted by an uncle, or a son by his father, with the management of his concerns, there is no certainty that he will not set up a separate interest of his own. Wardships and executorships, trusts of the most necessary and sacred kind, which all men leaving property and infant children must repose in surviving

* Of Coimbeture.

surviving friends, are in too many instances grossly abused. The confidence to which the Bengaleze are most true, is in the case of illicit practices, on which occasions they act upon a point of honour.

Even the Europeans, though in general possessed of power and of comparative strength of character, which makes them to be particularly feared, yet as often as they are careless or credulous in their transactions with the Bengaleze, find that they have fallen into the hands of harpies*.

Through the influence of similar principles, power entrusted to a native of Hindostan seldom fails of being exercised tyrannically, or perverted to the purposes of injustice. Official, or ministerial employments of all sorts, and in all gradations, are generally used as means of peculation.

It has already appeared that the distribution of justice, whenever it has been committed to natives, whether Hindoos or Mahomedans, has commonly† become a traffic in venality; the best cause being obliged to pay for success, and the worst having the opportunity of purchasing it. Money has procured acquittance even for murder. Such is the power of money, that no crime is more frequent, hardly any less thought of, than perjury. It is no extraordinary thing to see two sets of witnesses swearing directly contrary to each other, and to find, upon a minute investigation, that few probably of the evidences on either side have a competent knowledge of the matter in question. Now as these corruptions begin not in the practice of the courts of law, but have their origin in the character of the people, it is just to state them in illustration of that character; for although the legal reforms introduced by Lord Cornwallis will purify, it may be hoped, the fountains of justice, yet the best administration of law will not eradicate the internal principles of depravity.

Selfishness, in a word, unrestrained by principle, operates universally; and money, the grand instrument of selfish gratifications, may be called the supreme idol of the Hindoos. Deprived for the most part of political power, and destitute of boldness of spirit, but formed for business, artful, frugal, and persevering, they are absorbed in schemes for the gratification of avarice.

The tendency of that abandoned selfishness is to set "every man's hand against every man," either in projects, or in acts of open force. From violence however, fear interposes to restrain them. The people of the lower provinces in particular, with an exception of the military caste, are as dastardly as they are unprincipled. They seek their ends by mean artifices, low cunning, intrigue, falshood, servility, and hypocritical obsequiousness. To superiors they appear full of reverence, of humble and willing submission, and readiness to do every thing that may be required of them; and as long as they discern something either to expect or to fear, they are wonderfully patient of slights, neglects, and injuries. But under all this apparent passiveness and meanness of temper, they are immoveably persisting in their secret views. With inferiors, they indemnify themselves by an indulgence of the feelings which were controuled before; and towards dependents, especially towards those whom an official situation subjects to their authority, they carry themselves with the mean pride of low minds. In the inferior, and by far the most numerous class of the community, where each man is nearly on a level with his neighbour, the native character appears with less disguise. The passions have a freer range, and new consequences are seen to result from the absence of the primary virtues of society. Discord, hatred, abuse, slanders, injuries, complaints, and litigations, all the effects of selfishness unrestrained by principle, prevail to a surprising degree. They overspread the land, they come perpetually before all men in authority. The deliberate malice,

* If the reader should here advert to the many large fortunes which are brought from India, and thence infer that the Europeans make their own part good there, notwithstanding all the dishonest artifices of the Hindoos whom they are obliged to employ, he may be answered, that according to the judgment of the person who writes this, the great mass of the fortunes now acquired, is not by any mode of extortion or exaction taken out of the pockets of individuals. A considerable portion of it is derived from the offices, salaries, contracts, and emoluments, enjoyed under government. Another portion from commerce, particularly foreign commerce, in which Europeans have superior enterprize, character, and advantage. And if any part is obtained by forbidden means, still the acquisition may in general be traced ultimately to what is strictly public property, not the property of private individuals. These slight remarks are thrown out as worthy the consideration of those persons, who without examination or inquiry are apt to suspect, that every fortune gained in India is got by extortion. More might be added upon the subject, but it would not suit the design of the present work.

† There may be exceptions; Ibrahim Ali Khan of Benares is reckoned a man of probity.

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malice, the falshood, the calumnies, and the avowed enmity with which the people pursue each other, and sometimes from father to son, offer a very mortifying view of the human character. No stranger can sit down among them without being struck with this temper of malevolent contention and animosity, as a prominent feature in the character of the society. It is seen in every village, the inhabitants live among each other in a sort of repulsive state, nay it enters into almost every family. Seldom is there a houshold without its internal divisions, and lasting enmities, most commonly too on the score of interest. The women partake of this spirit of discord. Held in slavish subjection by the men, they rise in furious passions against each other, which vent themselves in such loud, virulent, and indecent railings, as are hardly to be heard in any other part of the world.

Though the Bengaleze in general have not sufficient resolution to vent their resentments against each other in open combat, yet robberies, thefts, burglaries, river piracies, and all sorts of depredations where darkness, secrecy, or surprize can give advantage, are exceedingly common, and have been so in every past period of which any account is extant. There are castes of robbers and thieves, who consider themselves acting in their proper profession, and having united their families, train their children to it. No where in the world are ruffians more adroit or more hardened. Troops of these banditti, it is well known, are generally employed or harboured by the zemindars of the districts, who are sharers in their booty. They frequently make attacks in bodies, and on those occasions murder is very common. But besides these regular corps, multitudes of individuals employ themselves in despoiling their neighbours. Nor is it only in large and populous places and their vicinity, that such violences are practised; no part of the country, no village is safe from them. Complaints of depredations in every quarter, on the highways, on the water as well as the land, are perpetual. Though these are the crimes more immediately within the reach of justice, and though numbers of criminals have been, and are executed, the evils still subsist. Doubtless the corrupt administration of criminal justice in Bengal, for many years under the authority of the Nabob, has greatly aggravated disorders of this nature; but they have their origin from remoter springs. Robbers among the Hindoos, and frequently thieves also, are educated from their infancy in the belief that their profession is a right one. No ray of instruction reaches them to convince them of the contrary, and the feeble stirrings of natural conscience are soon overborne by example and practice. Besides this, they hold, in common with other Hindoos, the principle of fatalism, which in their case has most pernicious effects. They believe that they are destined by an inevitable necessity to their profession, and to all that shall befal them in it; they therefore go on without compunction, and are prepared to resign life, whenever the appointed period shall come, with astonishing indifference; considering the law that condemns them, not as the instrument of justice, but as the power of a stronger party. And here again it is evident, that a radical change in principle must be produced, before a spirit of rapine, thus nourished, can be cured.

Benevolence has been represented as a leading principle in the minds of the Hindoos; but those who make this assertion know little of their character. How is it possible that benevolence should be vigorous where justice, truth, and good faith are so greatly wanting? Certain modes indeed of distributing victuals to mendicants, and a scrupulous abstinence from some sorts of animal food, are prescribed by the religion of the Hindoos. But the ostentatious distribution is frequently commutative; an offering from the gain of iniquity bestowed on idle and sturdy priests. And though a Hindoo would shrink with horror from the idea of directly slaying a cow, which is a sacred animal among them, yet he who drives one in his cart, galled and excoriated as she often is by the yoke, beats her unmercifully from hour to hour, without any care or consideration of the consequence. Though therefore the institution of the two practices in question, may be urged as an argument for the originally benevolent turn of the religion which enjoined them, it will not at all follow that individuals, who in future ages perform them in obedience to that religion, must also be benevolent; and he who is cruel even to that creature for which he is taught by his religion to entertain the highest reverence, gives the strongest proof of an unfeeling disposition. It is true that in many cases they are strict in observing forms. These are indeed their religion, and the foundation of their hopes; their castes are implicated in them, and in their castes their civil state and comfort. But of the sentiments which the forms would seem to indicate, they are totally regardless.

Though

Though from the physical structure of their bodies they are easily susceptible of impressions, yet that they have little real tenderness of mind, seems very evident from several circumstances. The first that shall be mentioned is the shocking barbarity of their punishments. The cutting off legs, hands, noses, and ears, putting out of eyes, and other penal inflictions of a similar kind, all performed in the coarsest manner, abundantly justify our argument.

A similar disposition to cruelty is likewise shown in their treatment of vanquished enemies. And in general a want of sensibility for others is a very eminent characteristic of this people. The apathy with which a Hindoo views all persons and interests unconnected with himself, is such as excites the indignation of Europeans. At any rate his regards extend but to a very narrow circle. Patriotism is absolutely unknown in Hindostan.

These observations lead us to another striking proof of want of benevolence in the Hindoos; namely, their deficiency of natural affection. It is admitted that examples are not very uncommon of parents who show much tenderness to their children, especially during their infancy; but instances on the other side are so general, as clearly to mark the dispositions of the people. The following fact is one out of many, by which this assertion might be justified. In the scarcity of grain which prevailed about Calcutta in the year 1788, a gentleman then high, now still higher in office there, ordered his servants to buy any children that might be brought for sale, (for in times of dearth Hindoo parents frequently sell their offspring,) and to tell their mothers, that when the scarcity should be over, they might come again and receive their children back. Of about twenty thus humanely preserved, most of whom were females, only three were ever enquired for by their mothers. The scarcity was neither extreme nor long. The unnatural parents cannot be supposed to have perished from want, for each received money for her child, and by the liberal contribution of the inhabitants of Calcutta, and chiefly of the Europeans, rice was distributed daily to multitudes at various stations about the city. And yet notwithstanding this facility of obtaining food, a woman was at that time seen, in broad day, to throw away her infant child upon the high road. Most of the slaves in Hindostan (where they are used only for domestic services) have lost their freedom by the act of their parents. If the necessity is such at times as to lead to this expedient, is it not also an occasion to call forth the warmth of parental affection? Filial and paternal affection appear equally deficient among them; and in the conjugal relation, the characteristic indifference of the people is also discernible among those who come most within the sphere of European observation, namely, the lower orders.

The domestic state of the better ranks is more concealed from general view; but from the knowledge which is acquired, and from the peculiar usages by which marriage is governed among the Hindoos, we have no reason to believe that it is often sweetened by generous attachment or rational enjoyment. The parties betrothed by their parents whilst mere children, transplanted, with minds uncultivated and inexperienced, from the maternal zenana* into one of their own, united whilst reason is still in its infancy, can give little more account of the situation in which they find themselves than animals of a lower species. Affection and choice have had no influence in this connection, nor does it often happen that the former is studied and improved. The parties continue passive under that law which first brought them together. According to the despotic manners of the East, the husband is lord, and the wife a servant; seldom does he think of making her a companion or a friend. Polygamy, which is tolerated among the Hindoos, tends still more to destroy all rational domestic society. The honour of the family, and the preservation of its caste, the most awful of its concerns, depends on the reputation of the wife. She is secluded from all eyes but those of her nearest relations, and the most terrifying and disgraceful punishments are held out against misconduct. From so early an union, and such subsequent care, Europeans may suppose that order and decorum reign in the Hindoo zenanas; but the conclusion is founded on conjecture, rather than upon actual knowledge. The profound reserve and caution observed by the men in their conduct, and even in their conversation, respecting their family connections, keep all foreigners at a distance; and it is to the honour of the English, that there is perhaps no instance of their attempting an invasion of the domestic recesses of the Hindoos. But those who have an opportunity of living among the natives in the interior of the country,

* The private apartments of the women.

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country, see reasons for apprehending that the purity of the female character is not always so well preserved in reality, as in appearance.

In a residence of several years entirely among the natives, the present writer heard so many charges of irregularity, and saw so many disorders among the inferior ranks, that he could not but believe the existence of a gross laxity of behaviour and principle in this great branch of morals, in some degree at least reaching to the better classes. But the disgrace and loss which follow to the family from the proof of dishonour in the wife, are such as to induce the parties concerned to hush up all matters of that sort, and to take their revenge in some secret way; they will seldom seek redress openly, unless the affair has already become notorious. Accusations by others of such contaminations in families, are very common among the lower Hindoos, and scandals of the same kind pass among the higher orders. Enmity, it is true, may be supposed to have its share in these charges; it may occasionally fabricate them, and is undoubtedly active in bringing them forward; but that it should always invent them, and should persevere in a succession of inventions which experience was ever ready to discredit, is not to be conceived. The truth is, the Hindoo writers, and the Hindoo laws, express the worst opinion of their women, and seem to place all security in vigilance, none in principle. And indeed what fund of principle can minds which have received no improvement in education, and in which reason as yet has hardly begun to act, carry into a premature and unchosen conjugal relation? a relation, the early commencement of which, is probably to be ascribed to the apprehension of parents for the conduct of their children. Imperious dominion, seclusion and terror, are the means afterwards used, to enforce the fidelity of the wife. But opportunities of guilt are not wanting. In the hours of business, men are generally at a distance from the retirements of the women; they are often, and for considerable periods, far from home; females, who are the great instruments of corrupting their own sex, are permitted access to the zenanas; besides the Hindoo law allows women to converse with Soneassees, a set of vagrant devotees, some of them most indecent in their appearance. The consequences are such as might be expected.

It is not however asserted or believed, that the infection of depravity has overspread the whole mass of females, many of whom, doomed to joyless confinement through life, and a violent premature death, are perhaps among the most inoffensive and suffering of the Hindoo race. As to the men, they are under little restraint from moral considerations. The laws of caste impose restrictions and fines for offences of the nature in question, so far as *that distinction* is concerned, but leave great scope for new connections, and for promiscuous intercourse, which is matter of little scruple or observation. Receptacles for women of infamous character are every where licensed, and the women themselves have a place in society. The female dancers, who are of this order, make the principal figure in the entertainments of ceremony given by the great. Indecency is the basis of their exhibitions; yet children and young persons of both sexes are permitted to be present at these shows, which have admittance even into the principal zenanas*. Licentious connections are therefore most common, though subsisting apparently without that intoxication of passion which hurries on the mind against conviction, and carried on without much concealment, nay almost with the insensibility of brutes. On such points, the Hindoos seem to advert to no rule except what the law enjoins; there is no sentiment, diffused at large through society, which attaches shame to criminality. Wide and fatal are the effects of this corruption of manners; a corruption not stopping here, but extending even to the unnatural practices of the ancient Heathens, though in these the Mahomedans are still more abandoned.

Europeans who not having *resided* in Asia, are acquainted only with a few detached features of the Indian character, may possibly feel some doubt whether this sketch, which professes to trace but the greater and more palpable lines, is to be received as a sober and faithful representation. They will reason concerning the Hindoos from what they have seen of human nature elsewhere; and it is unquestionably true, even that part of Europe which is most corrupt, offers no such picture as that which has been drawn in the preceding pages. They may be staggered too by having heard many discordant opinions on this very subject. For some modern philosophers already hinted at, whose aim has been to subvert, together with revealed religion, all ideas

* Lord Cornwallis, soon after his arrival in Bengal, refused to be present at an entertainment of this sort, to which he was invited by the Nabob.

ideas of the moral government of the Deity, and of man's responsibility to him, have exalted the natives of the East, and of other pagan regions, into models of goodness and innocence. Other writers, with far better views, indignant at the alledged delinquencies of Europeans in Hindostan, have described the natives of that country as a harmless, kind, peaceable, and suffering race. Others again, speak rather from an admiration inspired by the supposed past state of the Hindoos, mixed with pity for their present situation, than from experience of their actual qualities and dispositions. And there may be others still, who have not had much personal experience of the evils resulting from the state of society among the Hindoos, but being pleased with their obsequiousness, and easily acquiescing in the licenciousness prevalent among them, have been willing to treat of their character and proceedings with indulgence. The doubts, however, arising from these sources, will it is hoped, be entirely removed by the corroborating testimonies now about to be produced.

It is indeed true, that travellers are apt to form their opinions of countries and of nations from what they have themselves happened to see; and it is also to be remembered, that of the many Europeans who have visited India, especially in later times, the opportunities, the means, and perhaps the desire, of information, have been very different. We may all be sensible that more accurate observation, and mature experience, often correct the first impressions we receive, even of European countries or places new to us; and that it is no easy work to attain to a just and comprehensive knowledge of the character of any people. Whilst an European, deriving a superiority from his race, or from the station he is appointed to fill, regards only in a distant speculative way the effeminate exterior, adulatory address, and submissive demeanor of the Hindoos, he naturally enough conceives them to be a people in whom the mild and gentle qualities predominate. He is apt to consider them with a mixture of complacency and contempt; and even the bad dispositions towards each other, which he soon discovers to exist in them, he may view with feelings analogous to those which the petty malignity of children, or of beings of a diminutive species, might excite. But let him enter into dealings with them, let him trust them, or become in concerns of importance dependent on them; let him in short by these, or any other means, come more upon a level with them, and he will then learn better to appreciate their real character. Let it therefore be recollected, that as members of the same community they always stand, in many respects, on such a level with each other, suffering continually from mutual injuries; and that it is in thus viewing them, in considering not so much the mischiefs which they can do to us, as the evils which they diffuse through their own society, that we shall assign to them their true place in the moral scale. Whether that is done here, shall therefore be chearfully left to the determination of those who have had a long residence among them, and extensive dealings with them. It is believed, that no person of this description will think the picture now given, adds fictitious features, or aggravates real ones *.

It will not however be understood, that what is here advanced generally, is to be applied to the utmost extent to every individual, and every transaction; it is the universality of great depravity that is here insisted on,—a general moral hue, between which, and the European moral complexion, there is a difference, analogous to the difference of the natural colour of the two races.

There is a standard to which, for the elucidation of this subject, we may largely appeal,—the records of the East-India Company, which contain an immense collection of facts respecting the Hindoos, and relating to various subjects, political, judicial, financial, and commercial. Those records, less frequently profess to treat of character and common life, than of matters of business; but it continually happens, that they incidentally develope the principles and conduct of the Hindoos, and that in a more convincing way than if the primary object had been to describe them.

Nor

* It may be proper to remark, that the features here delineated, are taken from the Hindoo character as it generally exists in civil life. Those gentlemen who have passed their time chiefly in our Indian armies, may not have seen it with exactly the same aspects. The military caste of the Hindoos have a portion of those qualities which usually accompany the profession of arms: better pay, better treatment, and our high reputation in war, make it their interest to attach themselves to our service; they are withdrawn from many of the collisions of civil affairs, and they are under the powerful control of military discipline, which, with the habits of military life, must throw a perceptible distinction into their character, at least while they remain embodied in our employ; but when they retire and separate, they assimilate more to the rest of their countrymen.

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Nor do they contain the mere representations of Europeans, who might be suspected of a tincture of partiality in this case, but the natives are themselves brought upon the stage, and heard concerning each other. These records will be found abundantly to substantiate all that is here advanced.

To introduce a great variety of quotations from so copious a source, (as numerous as they must be, to do justice to the subject,) is not within the compass of the brief exposition here intended; but after having previously stated the opinion of an intelligent traveller, who observed the manners of the Hindoos in the last century, we shall select a few extracts, containing the sentiments of persons of distinguished information and respectability, writing at different periods, without any concert with each other, and under no temptation to depreciate the people of whom they speak.

BERNIER, about 1670.

" Ces sortes de rois barbares n'ont *aucune véritable générosité*, et *ne sont guères* " *retenus par la foi qu'ils ont promise*, ne regardant qu'à leurs intérêts présens, sans " songer mêmes aux malheurs qui leur peuvent arriver de leur perfidie, et de leur " brutalité.

" Pour se tirer de leurs mains, il faut être ou le plus fort, ou n'avoir rien qui " puisse exciter leur avarice."

" Je ne sai s'il y a au monde, *une nation plus avare et plus sordide que celle-là.*"

" Les Brahmens entretiennent ces peuples dans ces erreurs et superstitions, et *passent même jusques à des fourberies et à des vilainies si infâmes*, que je ne les aurois jamais pû croire, si je ne m'en étois pleinement informé*."

MR. SCRAFTON, 1759.

" The Gentoos *are found still more cruel and rapacious than their foreign masters*, " and what is more extraordinary, *the Brahmens still exceed the rest in every abuse* " *of power*, and *seem to think if they bribe God, by bestowing part of their plunder* " *on cows and faquirs, their iniquities will be pardoned.*"

" *Loyalty* and *patriotism*, those virtuous incentives to great and noble actions, *are here unknown*; and when they cease to fear they cease to obey."

" Such of the *Brahmens* as engage in the world, *are generally the worst of all the* " *Gentoos; for persuaded that the waters of the Ganges will purify them from their* " *sins, and being exempted from the utmost rigour of the courts of justice* under the " Gentoo government, *they run into the greatest excesses*†."

GOVERNOR HOLWELL, about 1760.

" A race of people, who from their infancy *are utter strangers to the idea of com-* " *mon faith and honesty.*"

" This is the situation of the bulk of the people of Indostan, as well as of the " modern Brahmins; amongst the latter, if we except one in a thousand, we give " them over measure."

" *The Gentoos in general, are as degenerate, crafty, superstitious, litigious, and* " *wicked a people, as any race of people in the known world, if not eminently more so,* " *especially the common run of Brahmins*; and we can truly aver, that during almost " five years that we presided in the Judicial Cutchery Court of Calcutta, *never any* " *murder or other atrocious crime came before us, but it was proved in the end a* " *Brahmin was at the bottom of it.*"‡

LORD CLIVE, 1765.

" The inhabitants of this country we know by long experience, *have no attach-* " *ment to any obligation.*§"

GOVERNOR

* Voyages de François Bernier, Tome I. page 150, 162. et Tome II. page 105.

† Reflections on the Government of Hindostan, by Luke Scrafton, Esq. pages 26, 27. See in the same work, page 19 & seq. a striking character of the Mahomedans of rank in India.

‡ Holwell's Historical Events, Vol. I. page 228, and Vol. II. page 151.

§ Cited by Bolt's Considerations, Vol. III. Appendix A, page 33.

GOVERNOR VERELST*, about 1768.

" It is customary with these people to spin out treaties to an immoderate length; " *avaricious in the highest degree, they endeavour by every artifice to encrease* " *their exorbitant demands; and faithless themselves, they are suspicious of the* " *faith of others.*"

" His (Haffez Rahmet Caun's) character has little to distinguish it, *except that low* " *cunning, intrigue, and deceit, so general in this country.*"

" The Nabob Sujah-al-Dowlah, is our next ally, and *if gratitude can be any tie* " *on an Hindostan heart*, we have every reason to look upon him as connected with " us by the most indissoluble bonds."

" His (Jewhar Sing's) character, like the majority of the great in Hindostan, is " that of a man absorbed in pleasure and luxury, weak, vain-glorious, aspiring, with- " out experience or abilities."

" The body of the people are in a manner formed to bear the yoke. They possess " nothing of the inquisitiveness of the European nations, and the most slender arts " (i. e. in things unknown to them) are sufficient to obscure their understanding, and " fit them for implicit submission."

" *It would be as easy to change the genius and manners of the people, as to* " *prevent the Banians and followers of men in station, from abusing their master's* " *name.* Chastisements may deter the oppression for a moment, but in such " cases, *the servility of the people must be removed before oppression can be* " *eradicated.*"

" An Englishman will ever be unfit to follow *the subtle native through all his arts.* " The *treachery of Hindostan professions will prepare* him better for the frank " declarations of his English allies."

" *The venality which forms part of the genius of the people, and which is known* " *to be openly exercised, or tacitly allowed by government, without drawing any* " *shame or discredit on the guilty, or being thought any peculiar hardship on the* " *injured . . . . . .*"

" *Every person of any substance or character in this country, has been successively* " *tried in the department of the collections. Fear, reward, severity, and indulgence,* " *have all failed*, and ended in a short political forbearance, *or additional acts of* " *dishonesty and rapine.*"

" The *evasions and artifices which are familiar to the natives of this country*, have " often been successful in screening them from that open and manifest detection " which can justify punishment."

" Certain it is, that *almost every decision of theirs* (the Mahomedan judges, who " continued to decide in criminal matters to the time of Lord Cornwallis) *is a* " *corrupt bargain with the highest bidder.* The numerous offences which are com- " promised by fines, have left a great latitude for very unjust determinations. Trifling " offenders, and even many condemned on fictitious accusations, are frequently " loaded with heavy demands; *and capital criminals are as often absolved by the* " *venal judges.*"

" *The peculiar punishment of forfeiting castes*, to which the Hindoos are liable, " *is often inflicted from private pique and personal resentment among themselves* †."

The GOVERNOR (MR. HASTINGS) and COUNCIL of BENGAL, about 1772.

" The decoits of Bengal are not, like the robbers in England, individuals driven " to such desperate courses by sudden wants. *They are robbers by profession, and* " *even by birth*; *they are formed into regular communities, and their families subsist* " *by the spoils which they bring home to them*; they are all therefore alike criminal; " wretches who have placed themselves in a state of declared war with government, " and are therefore wholly excluded from every benefit of its laws. *We have many* " *instances of their meeting death with the greatest insensibility.*"

" *The*

* Besides what has been already said of him, we may add that he was a well informed servant of the Company; and that many papers in the Appendix to his " View of Bengal," are valuable.

† Verelst's View of the English Government in Bengal; Original Papers in the Appendix, pages 58, 102, 103, 105, 108, &c.

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" *The litigiousness and perseverance of the natives of this country in their suits* " *and complaints*, is often productive, not only of *inconvenience and vexation to their* " *adversaries, but also of endless expence and actual oppression.*"

" To curb and restrain trivial and groundless complaints, *and to deter chicane* " *and intrigue, which passions amongst these people often work to the undoing of* " *their neighbours**. . . . . ."

MR. SHORE†, about 1783 or 1784.

" The *natives are timid and servile.* As individuals they are *insolent to their* " *inferiors*; to their superiors, generally speaking, submissive, though they are to " them *also guilty of insolence when they can be so with impunity.* Individuals *have* " *little sense of honour*, and *the nation is wholly void of public virtue. They make not* " *the least scruple of lying where falsehood is attended with advantage*; yet both Hin- " doos and Mahomedans, continually speak of their credit and reputation, by which " they mean little more than the appearance they make to the world."

" *Cunning and artifice is wisdom to them. To deceive and over-reach, is to acquire* " *the character of a wise man. The greatest disgrace they can suffer, is to lose their* " *caste, or as we say, to be excommunicated.* This punishment is inflicted for the " breach of the injunctions of their religion, or what is the same, of the ordinances " of their priests."

" *To lie, steal, plunder, ravish, or murder, are not deemed sufficient crimes to merit* " *expulsion from society.*"

" *With a Hindoo, all is centered in himself; his own interest is his guide*; " ambition is a secondary quality with him, and the love of money is the source of " his passion."

" The advantage they derive over Europeans, is *by practising those arts of mean-* " *ness, which an European detests.* A MAN MUST BE LONG ACQUAINTED WITH " THEM‡, *before he can believe them capable of that barefaced falsehood, servile* " *adulation, and deliberate deception, which they daily practise.* It is in vain that we " search for men of enlightened understanding, deep reasoning and reflection, among " the natives. The education of the Hindoos is confined to their being taught their " own language. The Mahomedans are little better instructed: the acquisition of a " few moral or political maxims, which in practice they neglect, is all they know of " the art of government: if exceptions can be found, they are very rare. An " Englishman cannot descend to *those little practices of oppression, or extortion, so* " *familiar to the natives, his mind revolts at the idea of them.* And admitting even " that some are by habit, connection, or necessity, become depraved, there is, after " all, in every breast, *a sense of honour and virtue that recoils from the low vicious* " *acts of a native of Bengal.* It is the business *of all, from the Ryott to the* " *Dewan, to conceal and deceive; the simplest matters of fact are designedly covered* " *with a veil, through which no human understanding can penetrate*§."

SIR JOHN MACPHERSON, Governor General, about 1785-6.

" I am afraid that the picture which he (Mr. Shore) draws, and the low ebb at which he states the popular virtues of the Bengalize, are *not fictitious repre-* *sentations*‖."

COLONEL SIR ROBERT BARKER.

" It is well known that neither promises nor oaths, have been able to bind this " treacherous sect of people to their engagements. Sujah Dowlah was like all other " Indostanners, not observing much faith when it was his interest to do otherwise¶".

The transcriber of the preceding pages, writing at a distance from public offices, and possessed of few unpublished documents, is not able to adduce any comprehen- sive

* Reports of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, 1772. Appendix, No. 2.

† Now Governor General of Bengal.

‡ To this declaration from a witness eminently competent, attention is particularly requested.

§ The whole of this curious paper is inserted in the Parliamentary proceedings against Mr. Hastings.

‖ Parliamentary Proceedings against Mr. Hastings, Appendix to Vol. II. page 67.—*The Remarks in the preceding sheets were penned before this document was examined by the writer of them.*

¶ Ibid. Appendix to Vol. I. page 229. and Vol. II. page 8.

sive opinion delivered by Lord Cornwallis, respecting the natives; but in the many papers on almost all subjects connected with his government, which his Lordship has entered on the records of the Company during his administration, his sentiments must be abundantly seen, and to those papers the reader is referred, without fear of their contradicting the views here given. A government of reform, like his Lordship's, implies a sense of many existing evils, and the conduct in one striking instance, of a person so considerate and humane, is entitled to particular notice. Though civil and attentive to the natives, *he has reposed no confidence in any one of them, nor has he had a single individual, either Hindoo or Mahomedan, about his person, above the rank of a menial servant, contrary to the general usage of men occupying such stations as he filled.*

Upon one very important subject, the criminal justice of the country, to the administration of which, Lord Cornwallis has given a new constitution, some of his observations, written as introductory to that essential improvement, are here exhibited.

3d DECEMBER, 1790.

"The regulation of justice in criminal cases, although constituting one of the most "essential requisites of good government, yet never appears (as far as can be traced) "to have received the attention it so well merits, under any system, either of the Mogul "or Hindoo administration, in India.....The next alteration I would propose is that "already alluded to, in regard to the option left to the next of kin, to remit the sentence "of the law and pardon the criminal. The evil consequences, and the crimes which "hereby escape punishment, are so manifest and frequent, that to take away the dis-"cretion of the relations, seems absolutely requisite to secure an equal administration "of justice, and will constitute a strong additional check on the commission "of *murder, and other crimes, which are now no doubt often perpetrated, under the "idea of an easy escape through the notorious defect of the existing law*, which at "first perhaps was confined to appeals, or private prosecutions, by the next of kin, "and had no application to public prosecutions in the name of the sovereign; and "which is besides peculiarly inapplicable to this country (however it may have "suited the society it was orignally intended for); because where *Brahmins commit "murder on any person of the Hindoo religion, they know that they do so with almost "perfect impunity*, since in most cases it cannot be expected that any Gentoo will "ever desire, or be consenting to the death of a Brahmin, of which a case exactly "in point, is now depending before the Board, from Benares, where *a Brahmin having "wantonly killed his wife, has, although confessing and convicted of the crime, been "pardoned by her relations.* But it is unnecessary to have recourse to the testi-"monies of the magistrates, *to prove the abuses practised in these courts.* The "multitudes of criminals with which the jails in every district are now crowded, *the "numerous murders, robberies, and burglaries, daily committed, and the general inse-"curity of person and property, which prevails in the interior parts of the country,* "are melancholy proofs of their having long and too generally existed. The "inefficacy of the clause in the engagements of the land-holders, making them res-"ponsible for all robberies, has been long experienced, and so far from protecting "the country, they or their police officers (who in general purchase their appoint-"ments, or pay an annual consideration for them) are but too often concerned in "the enormities it is their duty to prevent."

When this great change in the administration of criminal justice was in contemplation, various queries were proposed to the English magistrates, stationed throughout the country, respecting the existing state of the police. Their answers, which are inserted at length in the records of the Bengal government, present a scene of shocking disorder. As it would be too tedious to insert the whole of them upon a subject so little questionable, one only, which goes into character as well as facts, shall be quoted. It is from Mr. Rocke, the magistrate of Jessore.

DECEMBER, 1789.

"The punishments however, though they exceed in variety and severity, those "inflicted by a British court of justice, do not appear at all adequate to the suppres-"sion of crimes; and of this the Fougedary records, to the present hour, will bear a

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" melancholy testimony, as well with regard to the number, as the nature of the " offences, always to be found in the calendar. The partiality of the natives of this " country to a profession they have once embraced, and their extreme reluctance to " quit it, are notorious. The same principle and inherent prejudice, which attach " the mechanic to his particular line of profession, operate equally upon the robber, " house-breaker, or murderer, who, desperate as his occupation is, cherishes it " as much, holds it as dear, and follows it as systematically, as the peaceful merchant " his easy and lucrative one. Besides this, the constitutional apathy of the natives " of this country, and the patience with which they endure pain, and even resign life, " render them, for the most part, regardless of corporal sufferance; and principally " to this cause may be ascribed the reason, why crimes of all descriptions still " continue to be perpetrated, although such frequent sacrifices are made to the " offended laws."

" Of the effects produced by the different modes of punishment in this country, " we have frequent experience. It may be needless to particularize the milder ones " inflicted for trifling offences, as their effects may be judged of from what we see " produced by those of greater magnitude, and more severe nature. Perpetual im- " prisonment is, I think, improperly regarded as a punishment of a higher order. " To British minds, the idea it conveys is indeed dreadful; but there is nothing in it " so terrible to a native of Bengal, to whose natural indolence and inactivity, a life of " this nature is perfectly congenial, and whilst the necessaries and comforts of life " are within their reach, the restraint they are under is a circumstance of no great " hardship to them, being seldom or never so close as to debar them from intercourse " with the rest of the world. The effects of this punishment are, I apprehend, " never such as must evidently have been expected from it, as being in rank imme- " diately next to a capital one. Loss of a hand, or a foot, is undoubtedly a punish- " ment of a very severe nature, as being not only a painful and dangerous operation, " but at once depriving the body of a most useful limb, and stamping a mark of " indelible infamy upon it, and yet this is so little regarded, that *many an offender, on* " *apprehension, is found to have already forfeited a limb, and sometimes even two, to* " *the laws. Death*, the last, and in the general opinion of mankind, the greatest of " all punishments, fails here greatly of its intended effect. *Fortified by their strong* " *religious prejudices and notions of predestination, and not unfrequently elated with* " *the idea of suffering as martyrs to the cause, and amidst the prayers and applauses* " *of their confederates, criminals in this country, meet death with indifference and* " *composure.*"

Authentic relations of the transactions of Hindoo nations, and Hindoo individuals with each other, would constitute a very satisfactory kind of evidence in the illustration of their character. But of true history they possess few records. The genius of the government, and the genius of the people, were alike unfavourable to that species of composition. Such accounts however as have reached us of their ancient wars, exhibit pictures of eminent cruelty and injustice.

Of recent times, the public occurrences, in which Europeans have been parties or witnesses, are generally diffused through voluminous official writings, which if accessible, could not be perspicuously contracted within one division of this limited work; and of private observation and experience, which might have furnished many curious and instructive collections, seldom has it been the practice to register accurate details. But happily one testimony presents itself, which unites with unquestionable authority, views of Hindoo character, in a country never under a Mahomedan power. This country is Nepaul, and the relation is given by Father Joseph, a Romish missionary of known respectability in Bengal, from whom it was communicated by Mr. (now Sir John) Shore, to the Asiatic Society*. Father Joseph was in Nepaul in the year 1769. Three chiefs of that region then contended for sovereignty, and some of their proceedings are described in the following extracts.

" The inhabitants of Certipore, receiving no support from the King of Lelit- " Pattan, to whom they were subject, applied for assistance to Gainprejas, who " immediately marched with his whole army to their relief, gave battle to the army " of the King of Gorc'ha, and obtained a complete victory. A brother of the King " of Gorc'ha was killed on the field of battle, and the King himself, by the assistance " of good bearers, narrowly escaped with his life by fleeing into the mountains.

" After

* Asiatic Researches, Vol. II. page 307.

" After the action, the inhabitants of Certipore demanded Gainprejas for their " King, and the nobles of the town went to confer with him on the business; *but* " *being all assembled in the same apartment with the King, they were all surprised* " *and seized by his people. After the seizure of those persons, Gainprejas, perhaps* " *to revenge himself of these nobles for having refused their concurrence to his* " *nomination as King* (upon a former occasion) *privately caused some of them to be* " *put to death; another, by name Danuvanta, was led through the city in a woman's* " *dress, along with several others, cloathed in a ridiculous and whimsical manner,* " *at the expence of the nobles of Lelit-Pattan.* They were then kept in close con- " finement for a long time; at last, after making certain promises, and interesting " all the principal men of the country in their behalf, Gainprejas set them at " liberty. . . . . ."

" The King of Gorc'ha, despairing of his ability to get possession of the plain " of Nepaul by strength, *hoped to effect his purpose by causing a famine*; and with " this design, stationed troops at all the passes of the mountains, to prevent any " intercourse with Nepaul: *and his orders were most rigorously obeyed, for every* " *person who was found in the road, with only a little salt or cotton about him, was* " *hung upon a tree; and he caused all the inhabitants of a neighbouring village,* " *to be put to death in a most cruel manner; even the women and children did not* " *escape, for having supplied a little cotton to the inhabitants of Nepaul; and when* " *I arrived in that country at the beginning of* 1769, *it was a most horrid spectacle* " *to behold so many people hanging on trees in the road.* However the King of " Gorc'ha, being also disappointed in his expectations of gaining his end by this " project, fomented dissensions among the nobles of the three kingdoms of Nepaul, " and attached to his party many of the principal ones, by holding forth to them, " liberal and enticing promises, for which purpose he had about two thousand " Brahmins in his service. . . . . ."

" The inhabitants of Certipore having already sustained six or seven months " siege, a noble of Lelit-Pattan, called Danuvanta, fled to the Gorc'ha party, and " treacherously introduced their army into the town; the inhabitants might still " have defended themselves, having many other fortresses in the parts of the town " to retreat to; but the people of Gorc'ha having published a general amnesty, the " inhabitants, greatly exhausted by the fatigues of a long siege, *surrendered them-* " *selves prisoners upon the faith of that promise.* In the mean time the men of " Gorc'ha seized all the gates and fortresses within the town; *but two days after-* " *wards, Prit'hwinarayan, who was at Navacuta* (a long day's journey distant) " *issued an order to Suruparatna, his brother, to put to death some of the principal* " *inhabitants of the town, and to cut off the noses and lips of every one, even the* " *infants, who were not found in the arms of their mothers, ordering at the same* " *time, all the noses and lips which had been cut off, to be preserved, that he might* " *ascertain how many souls there were, and to change the name of the town* " *into Naskatapur, which signifies the town of cut-noses. The order was carried* " *into execution with every mark of horror and cruelty, none escaping but those who* " *could play on wind-instruments*; although Father Michael Angelo, who without " knowing that such an inhuman scene was then exhibited, had gone to the house of " Suruparatna, interceded much in favour of the poor inhabitants. Many of them " put an end to their lives in despair; others came in great bodies to us in search " of medicines, and it was most shocking to see so many living people with their " teeth and noses resembling the skulls of the deceased."

" During the siege of Cat'hmandu, the Brahmins of Gorc'ha came almost every " night into the city, to engage the chiefs of the people on the part of their King; " and the more effectually to impose upon poor Gainprejas, many of the principal " Brahmins went to his house, and told him to persevere with confidence, that the " chiefs of the Gorc'ha army were attached to his cause, and that even they them- " selves would deliver up their King, Prit'hwinarayan, to his hands. Having by " these artifices procured an opportunity of detaching from his party all his principal " subjects, tempting them with liberal promises according to their custom, one night " the men of Gorc'ha entered the city without opposition, and the wretched Gain- " prejas, perceiving he was betrayed, had scarce time to escape with about three " hundred of his best and most faithful Hindostany troops, towards Lelit-Pattan, " which place however he reached the same night."

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" The King of Gorc'ha, having made himself master of Cat'hmandu in the year " 1768, persisted in the attempt of possessing himself also of the city of Lelit-" Pattan, promising all the nobles that he would suffer them to remain in the " possession of their property, that he would even augment it; and because the " nobles of Lelit-Pattan placed *a** reliance on the faith of his promises, he sent his " domestic priest to make this protestation, That if he failed to acquit himself of " his promise, he should draw curses upon himself and his family, even to the fifth, " past, and succeeding generation: so that the unhappy Gainprejas, and the King " of Lelit-Pattan, seeing that the nobility were disposed to render themselves " subject to the King of Gorc'ha, withdrew themselves with their people to the " King of B'hatgan. When the city of Lelit-Pattan became subject to the King " of Gorc'ha, he continued for some time to treat the nobility with great attention, " and proposed to appoint a viceroy of the city from among them. Two or three " months afterwards, having appointed the day for making his formal entrance into " the city of Lelit-Pattan, *he made use of innumerable stratagems to get into his " possession the persons of the nobility, and in the end succeeded.* He had prevailed " upon them to permit their sons to remain at court, as companions of his son; he " had dispatched a noble of each house to Navacut, or New Fort, pretending that " the apprehensions he entertained of them had prevented his making a public " entrance into the city; *and the remaining nobles were seized at the river without " the town, where they went to meet him, agreeable to a prior engagement.* After-" wards he entered the city, made a visit to the temple of Baghero, adjoining to " our habitation, and passing in triumph through the city amidst immense numbers " of soldiers, who composed his train, entered the royal palace which had been " prepared for his reception; in the mean time, parties of his soldiers broke open " the houses of the nobility, seized all their effects, and threw the inhabitants of the " city into the utmost consternation. *After having caused all the nobles who were " in their power to be put to death, or rather their bodies to be mangled in a horrid " manner*, he departed with a design of besieging B'hatgan, and we obtained per-" mission, through the interest of his son, to retire with all the christians into the " possessions of the English."

A multitude of other quotations which might be made in illustration of the Hindoo character, both from modern publications and from authors of more ancient date, as Sir Thomas Rowe, Hamilton, Baldæus, Nieuhoff, Tavernier, and others, are for the sake of brevity omitted; but as it may be interesting to see the sentiments of so distinguished a character as Timour, or Tamerlane, upon the subject in question, these extracts shall be closed with a quotation from his Institutes, supposed to have been compiled *A. D.* 1400.

" The inhabitants of Hindostan are equally debilitated in their corporeal, and " inert in their mental faculties; inexorable and penurious to such an extreme, that " only personal violence can enforce justice. Regardless of honour, and indecent in " their dress, they sacrifice their lives for trifles, and are indefatigable in unworthy " pursuits; whilst improvident and imprudent, their ideas are confined and views " circumscribed. When reduced to poverty, they patiently have recourse to the " most menial employments, forgetting their previous circumstances, and seldom " quitting the world without injuring their benefactors; but whilst the acquisition of " riches tempers every atrocity, indolence pervades their most momentous transac-" tions. The native of Hindostan has no pretensions to humanity but the figure; " whilst imposture, fraud, and deception, are by him considered as meritorious " accomplishments †."

Of the Mahomedans, who mix in considerable numbers with the former inhabitants of all the countries subdued by their arms in Hindostan, it is necessary also to say a few words. Originally of the Tartar race, proud, fierce, and lawless; attached also to their superstition, which cherished their native propensities; they were rendered by success yet more proud, sanguinary, sensual, and bigotted. Their government, though

* So in the original; but it seems to be an error of the press, the sense requiring that it should be "*no* reliance."

† Mackay's Asiatic Miscellany, Vol. I. page 279. This picture may be compared with that which Sir John Shore, drawing likewise from the life, more than three hundred years afterwards, has delineated. If it be said, that these are the representations of conquerors and foreigners, it may be replied, that they are not opinions advanced in a state of hostility or controversy, but mature observations, made in a time of settled government, after many years experience of the behaviour of the Hindoos to each other.

CHAP. II.
View of the Morals of the Hindoo Subjects of Great Britain.

though meliorated under the house of Timour, was undoubtedly a violent despotism, and the delegated administration of it too often a severe oppression. Breaking through all the restraints of morals which obstructed their way to power, they afterwards abandoned themselves to the most vicious indulgences, and the most atrocious cruelties. Perfidy in them, was more signal than in the Hindoos. Successive treacheries, assassinations, and usurpations, mark their history more perhaps than that of any other people. The profession of arms was studied by them, and they cultivated the Persian learning. They introduced Arabic laws, formed for rude and ignorant tribes, and in the administration of them, as may be judged from the specimen above exhibited, were most corrupt.

Every worldly profession, indeed every course of secular business, was in their avowed opinion (an opinion which they still hold) irreconcilable with strict virtue. Commerce, and the details of the finances, they left chiefly to the Hindoos, whom they despised and insulted. Where their government still prevails, the character resulting from their original temper, and superstition, aggravated by the enjoyment of power, remains in force. In our provinces, where their authority is subverted, and where many of them fall into the lower lines of life, that character becomes less obvious; but with more knowledge, and more pretensions to integrity, they are as unprincipled as the Hindoos. Their perfidy, however, and licentiousness, are the perfidy and licentiousness of a bolder people*.

From the government and intermixture of the Mahomedans, the Hindoos have certainly derived no improvement of character. The invaders, may fairly be supposed to have contributed their share to the general evils, and even to have increased them. But they did not produce those evils, nor could they have perpetuated them in opposition to the genius and spirit of the Hindoos, who are in number probably as eight to one. They may therefore be considered, rather as constituting an accession, than as giving a character to the mass. The vices however of the Mahomedans, and Hindoos, are so homogeneous, that in stating their effects, it is not inaccurate to speak of both classes under the description of the one collective body into which they are now formed.

Upon the whole, then, we cannot avoid recognizing in the people of Hindostan, a race of men lamentably degenerate and base; retaining but a feeble sense of moral obligation; yet obstinate in their disregard of what they know to be right, governed by malevolent and licentious passions, strongly exemplifying the effects produced on society by great and general corruption of manners, and sunk in misery by their vices†, in a country peculiarly calculated by its natural advantages, to promote the happiness of its inhabitants. The delineation from which this conclusion is formed, has been a task so painful, that nothing except the consciousness of meaning to do good could have induced the author to proceed in it. He trusts he has an affecting sense of the general imperfection of human nature, and would abhor the idea of needlessly or contemptuously exposing the defects of any man, or set of men. If he has given an unfavourable description, his wish is not to excite detestation, but to engage compassion, and to make it apparent, that what speculation may have ascribed to physical and unchangeable causes, springs from moral sources capable of correction.

CHAP. III.

Causes which have produced the present Situation and Character of the Hindoos.

CHAP. III.
Causes of the present Situation and Character of the Hindoos.

IN investigating the peculiar characters of different nations, it is both usual and reasonable to ascribe them principally to the influence of climate, of government and laws, and of religion: it will be proper, therefore, to lay before the reader the situation of Hindostan, with respect to each of those particulars, that he may be enabled

* See the character of the Mahomedans, before alluded to, in Scrafton's Reflections, p. 19, et seq.

† Some persons may be disposed to enquire, how the frame of society has been preserved from dissolution solution among these people, if they are indeed so greatly and so generally depraved. To that question, an answer will be given in the course of the following chapter.

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enabled to judge whether the wretched state of society and manners among the Hindoos, who, as has been already observed, have a general identity of character, may not fairly be traced to that source.

The climate of India, particularly of the south-east provinces, must be allowed to be less favourable to the human constitution than the more temperate regions of Europe. The bodily frame is less strong and hardy, the faculties have less energy, their exercise is less expanded and delightful, ardor is checked, the oppressed spirits yield more easily to indolence and indulgence, and the fertility of the soil easily supplying the few natural wants of the natives, aids this propensity. Nevertheless in developing the causes of the Hindoo character, too much seems sometimes to have been imputed to the climate; effects greater, and of more necessary result, than fair examination will confirm.

The inhabitants of foreign descent, who continue the use of animal food, especially the Armenians, a sober people, are more robust than the Hindoos; and to speak of the Hindoos themselves, their military tribe has discovered, under foreign discipline, a considerable share of active vigor. The Banians, and all the trading part of the community, are capable of long sedentary application. Porters, boatmen, runners, and others of the labouring class, can endure severe fatigue. Multitudes of devotees manifest a resolution and perseverance in painful sufferings altogether astonishing. And with regard to the faculties of the mind, the Brahmins, who have cultivated learning, have certainly evinced themselves an acute, subtle, and penetrating order of men. These circumstances show, that the people in general are equal at least to decent application in different lines, susceptible even of a strong impulse, though not perhaps of great continued energy. And it is reasonable to believe, that were those evils corrected which do not arise from the climate, they would in time hold a much higher place among the human species, than they are now capable of maintaining.

The despotic mode of government which generally is prevalent in the East, and appears at all times to have subsisted among the Hindoos, has undoubtedly had a very considerable influence in the formation of their character. When a man finds himself dependent on the will and caprice of another, he thinks and acts as a degraded being; his regard for all that is valuable in life is reduced to the degree of personal interest which he has in it, his care for whatever extends to the rest of his race, and to future time, is sunk in the precariousness of the present hour. Fear necessarily becomes his grand principle of action; thence springs distrust; and as arbitrary power does not excite in those over whom it tyrannizes, the expectation of finding truth and justice its associates, it is not productive of integrity and veracity. The arts of deception, suppleness, and servility, are resorted to, and thus a system of falsehood and narrow selfishness is generated. Violence in the ruler quickens the process. The first idea raised is that of self-defence against him; then follow plans of concealed and avowed hostility against his deputies and agents, from whom injury is apprehended. The despotic principle actuates all the subordinate offices, and posts of authority, and its effects become general; every man is a slave to those above him, and a despot to those below him; the more he is oppressed, the more he oppresses; and thus is diffused a temper of universal enmity, acting secretly or openly according to opportunities. No wonder therefore, that when the principle is highly strained, treasons and revolutions are continual; by which the insolent and abject frequently change places, so that he who yesterday scarcely deigned to look on the suppliant before him, is today spurned from the feet of that suppliant, now in his turn exalted to the seat of authority. Such, in particular, is the description that may be given of a large period of the Mahomedan government in Hindostan. The descendants of Timour, holding for a time the greater part of that continent under one head, prevented much of the war and bloodshed that had before, and have since wasted it; but internal disorders, under the best of their governors, were necessarily very great; and the character of the Hindoos, suffering from the oppression of numerous invaders, must in several respects have been debased.

But they did not receive the despotic form of government from the Tartars, nor were they degraded only when they became subject to Mahomedan conquerors. Had they not been an abject people before, foreigners from a vast distance, carrying few magazines with them, could not have possessed themselves of so great a country, rendered by its natural defences, its climate, and its periodical rains, very strong against invasions by land. They have had among themselves a complete despotism from the remotest antiquity; a despotism, the most remarkable for its power and duration that the

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Causes of the present Situation and Character of the Hindoos.

the world has ever seen. It has pervaded their government, their religion, and their laws. It has formed by its various ramifications, the essentials of the character which they have always had, as far as the light of history goes, and which they still possess; that character, which has made them a prey to every invader, indifferent to all their rulers, and easy in the change of them; as a people, void of public spirit, honour, attachment; and in society, base, dishonest, and faithless. That despotism, with a variety of subordinate principles to which it has given birth, still exists in great vigour, even where the political government is in foreign hands, and therefore although by acting the part of upright rulers towards our Hindoo subjects, and endeavouring to provide for a fair administration of justice among them, we shall repress many disorders that before prevailed, yet this reform will not reach those evils in their character and conduct, already described, which are the bane of their happiness, personal and social. Nor will it ensure to us their attachment, which, in point of policy, it would be desirable to engage by an amelioration of their character, instead of leaving their old facility in changing, to co-operate with their imbecility, in favour of any new invader.

The ancient Hindoo government is thought scarcely to exist now in its original form*. The Hindoo states, raised from the ruins of the Mogul Empire, cannot well be taken as pure representations of it; at least we have but little certainty of possessing an entire model, and can therefore only refer to its fundamental principles, of which there is indisputable evidence. But their religion and their laws, both parts of one complex system, still remain; the former in all its authority, the latter also, in its essence and in many of its branches, operative: and these, by the principles on which they are founded, and by the rules and precepts which they deliver, have given birth to that spirit, and those practices of oppression, injustice, corruption, in a word, those immoralities which incomparably more than every other cause, render the people base and miserable. To this position, the most particular attention is requested. A full exhibition of all the proofs which might be brought in support of it, would require a much longer space than is necessarily prescribed to this treatise. Some leading facts and arguments however, sufficient it is hoped solidly to establish it, shall now be stated. They will be derived partly from the code of Hindoo laws, and partly from the tenets of the Hindoo religion. The code of laws was compiled and published in 1773, under the government of Mr. Hastings, and at his desire, by a body of "experienced lawyers, selected for the purpose from "every part of Bengal," who we are further told, "carefully picked out the "ordinances, sentence by sentence, from various originals in the Shanscrit language, "neither adding to, nor diminishing from, any part of the ancient text†." And the translator adds, what is of importance to be observed, "that from this code may "be formed a precise idea of the customs and manners of these people; that their "institutes are interwoven with the religion of the country, and therefore revered as "of the highest authority." The authenticity of this work, and the value of the general evidence which it furnishes, must thence be unquestionable.

With regard to the religion of the Hindoos, although a regular translation of the Vedes, those writings which they repute as sacred, has not yet given us all their mythology, doctrines, rites, and ceremonies, in authoritative detail; yet the intercourse of three centuries between the Europeans and that people, the relations of various travellers in different parts of India, and their agreement as to the general matter and character, as well as many particulars of the Gentoo faith, the elucidating accounts of the Mahomedans, and the daily experience of multitudes of Europeans, leave us at no loss concerning the grand features, the main credenda and agenda of that superstition, its genius, and its consequences. Of late the public has had other accessions of information, stamped with great authority. We refer, in the first place, to the Institutes of the Emperor Akber, compiled by his learned and intelligent minister

* The government of Nepaul, of which less was known when this passage was written, is probably no inexact representation of the original Hindoo constitution. Of that country, which, as has been already observed, was never subdued by the Musslemans, our information was scanty before the late deputation thither of Captain Kirkpatrick from Bengal. That gentleman has given a curious and interesting account of his journey, which affords much light into the history of Nepaul. It would thence appear, that the form of the government, the state officers, civil and military, employed under it, and the sources of its revenue, are nearly the same in kind as are found to have been established in Hindostan under the rule of the Moguls; a strong presumption in favour of what we have ventured elsewhere to suppose, that these conquerors did not innovate greatly in the forms of administration in the Hindoo countries of which they possessed themselves. 1797.

† Preface to the Hindoo Code.

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minister Abul Fazil, about *A. D.* 1550, in the zenith of the Mogul power*; one volume of which work is employed solely upon the religion and sciences of the Hindoos, and professedly formed from the communications of the most learned Brahmins. We may rest assured, that such a man, employed in a work intended for a public record of the highest order, would obtain from that source much authentic information, and that the view given him of the Hindoo doctrines would be at least sufficiently favourable. Favourable indeed, both in respect of those doctrines and the character of the people, that view will appear to have been, by comparing it with other authorities; and there are obvious reasons why the noble writer would naturally be disposed to acquiesce in it. It was the design of Akber, who was of a tolerant spirit, to conciliate all his subjects towards himself and towards each other; and in a work composed immediately under his inspection with this intention, and for public use, it could never be admissible to delineate at length the faults of the great body of those subjects.

The second recent acquisition, is the *Bhagvad-Geeta*, translated by Mr. Wilkins from a Shanscrit work, certainly of considerable antiquity. This is a very curious record. It is deemed to be so purified from the grosser parts of the Hindoo superstition, that it is carefully concealed by the Brahmins from the rest of the people; yet it has evidently been corrupted, in order to conciliate some tolerably just principles with a degenerate practice. Besides these publications, Sir William Jones†, a man wonderful for his stores of knowledge, and for the ardour with which he still presses forward to increase them, who penetrates into the abstruse recesses of oriental learning with singular felicity and success, has communicated much valuable information from his late researches. Arrived at length at the fountains of Shanscrit learning, he indeed appears to consider past discoveries as inaccurate or imperfect‡; referring probably to the speculative and metaphysical doctrines contained in the Vedes, concerning which the Brahmins themselves have divers opinions and systems. But of the obvious and popular tenets of the Hindoo religion, its worship, and ceremonies, enough is certainly known to enable us to judge of their nature and their effects.

In the following pages, the writer will rest the argument he maintains, on information already before the public, rather than on any new matter which his own observation, during his residence in India, might enable him to furnish. For though the shoots from the great trunk of Hindoo superstition are so numerous, and all partake of the same nature, yet the additional facts which a single individual, whose attention was not wholly devoted to the subject, could have an opportunity of ascertaining, must appear trifling, in comparison of the whole mass of knowledge collected by the industry of numbers, during a long course of time, and rendered more worthy of notice by ascending nearer the source of things. And where important deductions are to be made, as in the present case, he is far from wishing the premises from which they are drawn to rest upon his authority.

It is proposed then, to proceed to the consideration of the Hindoo laws. But since it has appeared that both the Mahomedan and English conquerors of India have by legislative provisions of their own, in part superseded those which they found there, persons who reason from the changes which have relatively taken place in the social state and in the laws, of every European nation, and from the mutual influence of laws and of manners upon each other, may naturally conceive, that rules which have been abrogated

* Translated from the Persian into English, by Francis Gladwin, Esq.

† Europe, and Asia, and the world, have since sustained an irreparable loss in the death of this most valuable man, who was cut off in the vigour of his days, and in the midst of new inquiries and discoveries, among the recondite repositories of Hindoo learning, into which he carried such a lamp of general knowledge, as threw surprizing light on every subject he investigated. What he has done, however, will immortalize his memory. He has opened the way into the mythological and scientific arcana of a people, who have for many ages been as remarkable for their adherence to their peculiar institutions, as for arrogating to themselves an unfathomable antiquity, and the possession of a pure and primeval, though carefully concealed system of theology and science; claims which have been as officiously as ignorantly accorded to them by some anti-christian philosophers of Europe. He has shown that one of their earliest traces of true history describes an *universal deluge*, in which only *a patriarch*, and *seven* other men, (to whom this account gives wives,) were saved in an *ark*; and that the whole of their chronology is reconcileable with the Mosaic history.—See Asiatic Researches, Vol. II. Art. "Chronology of the Hindoos."——It is impossible on this occasion to avoid expressing a very high degree of respect and esteem for the learned and instructive labours of various other members of that distinguished society. Though the character of the Hindoos be in a moral view now low, yet the development of their history, their literature, their mythology, and science, has been a great desideratum in human knowledge, and must prove of eminent importance to mankind. 1797.

‡ Asiatic Researches, Vol II.

abrogated can no longer affect the character of the people; therefore that before any application is made of evidence deduced from the Hindoo laws, it ought to be shown what portion of those laws is still operative, and from that portion only to estimate the effect produced. It is the wish of the writer, to allow to this objection all the weight to which it is entitled, and as far as he can, to afford the satisfaction which it requires.

To give an exact enumeration of the Hindoo laws, and to distinguish those which may now be regarded as obsolete, would, if the task could be performed, require a detail inconsistent with the design of this essay. But no such digest has yet been made. The general lines of discrimination however are tolerably clear. The Mahomedans, as we have seen, introduced their own forms of judicature. In criminal matters, their code, severe and barbarous, like that of the Hindoos, was made the general rule of judgment. In civil concerns between Hindoos, these people had the benefit of their own laws. The English continued, as we have also seen, the legal establishments of their predecessors, improving them, and softening in some instances the cruelty of punishment. At present therefore, the criminal law administered in Bengal, is that of the Mahomedans rendered in certain cases more mild and equitable. The civil code stands likewise upon the basis of their system, but has a larger infusion of English ordinances, and it refers causes between Hindoos to be decided by the laws of that people.

Those laws prescribe certain rules to the *sovereign*, which cannot of course be acted upon in our government, though the general influence of a governing power will still be felt: and on subjects of political economy, such as cultivation of the soil, revenue, and commerce, respecting which the Hindoo code is very defective, we have been obliged to enact new regulations.

On the whole, besides the Hindoo institutions, purely religious, all those which relate to castes, to marriage, to inheritance, and to divers other civil concerns, remain still in force; excepting only that certain offences against caste, for which the code decrees capital or sanguinary punishments, dreadfully severe, are not cognizable in our criminal courts; nor does our government countenance the infliction of those barbarities; and transgressions of the innumerable rules of caste being tried among themselves, are commonly punished by fines or excommunications. Still however, the branches now particularized, of their system, are those which have the greatest influence in the formation of their character and manners; and it should be remembered, that the ways in which caste may be contaminated or lost, have been, in course of time, arbitrarily and exceedingly multiplied.

But in estimating the effect produced upon the Hindoos of our territories, even by that portion of their institutions which is in a proper sense legal, some other considerations must be taken into the account.

The Hindoo law stands upon the same authority as the Hindoo religion; both are parts of one system, which they believe to have been divinely revealed. That law is regarded by them therefore with a superstitious veneration, which institutions avowedly of human origin do not produce; so that even under a foreign yoke, which in various particulars superseded its injunctions, it still maintained its credit. Hence may be deduced, in part, the predilection of that people, especially of the leading orders, for their ancient state and peculiar customs, which in all the long period of Mahomedan rule, prevented them from being assimilated to the institutions of their conquerors.

Laws, which by tacit consent have fallen into general disuse, can no longer be quoted as characteristic of the actual state of manners. They serve rather to prove some change in the sentiments or dispositions of a people; but the abrogation or suspension, by the power of a foreign master, of certain parts of a code still approved, does not necessarily infer any such alteration. The Hindoos have generally in their intercourses with each other, acted in the spirit of their own institutions. The landholders, for instance, many of them possessing extensive districts, have been to their obsequious dependents, as petty sovereigns; causes originating in their vicinity have been very commonly referred to their decision, or even in parts more distant, to their deputies. Disputes are also frequently referred to the Brahmins. Matters of caste are solely cognizable by them, or by arbitrators of the tribe in which the contest breaks out, and form a source of endless litigation. If even encreasing security and ease conciliate them more to our government, which is probable, they will still perhaps ascribe the change, not to the superiority of our system over their own, but

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to the superior personal conduct of the English, who preside over them. Their Mahomedan rulers, especially since the accession of the line of Timour, have partly from political, and partly from venal motives, paid considerable regard to their prejudices; and the English, both in the execution of the laws, and in the general exercise of their authority, have uniformly and spontaneously displayed a spirit of extreme toleration and indulgence to all their peculiar notions and usages.

It is to be remembered also, that our subjects form only a small part of the vast race of people who profess the Hindoo faith, and that with whole nations of these, they live in immediate contact.

Nor lastly, must it be overlooked, that the account which has been given of the Hindoos, is a description of their character as it exists after a long suspension by their former rulers (a suspension continued by us) of some of the worst parts of their legal system.

If all these things then be considered, together with the influence of the congenial institutions, which are still authoritatively in force, perhaps we shall not see reason to suppose, that the innovations which we have made in the administration of law among the Hindoos, have produced, or are likely to produce, any material change in their character; but we may rather expect that this character will still bear the lively impress of the general spirit of their institutions, civil and sacred. To illustrate that spirit, is one object particularly proposed by the survey upon which we are now to enter of the Hindoo code.

Despotism is not only the principle of the government of Hindostan, but an original, fundamental, and irreversible principle in the very frame of society. The law, not contenting itself with enjoining passive obedience to the magistrate, or sovereign, and with having a due regard to the inequalities in condition, and subordinations in rank, which arise from the constitution of the world, and are plainly agreeable to the will of the great Creator, rests entirely on the following fundamental position:—that certain classes or races of the society are in their elementary principles, in the matter from which they were formed, absolutely of a higher nature, of a superior order in the scale of being, to certain other classes. It is, in the opinion of the Hindoos, an awful and momentous truth, a truth maintained in full vigour to this day, a truth placed in the front of their code, that the Brahmins were formed from the mouth of Brimha, the Kheterees from his arm, the Vyse (or Bice) from his thigh, and the Sooders from his foot. Hence it is a necessary consequence, that this primeval and essential distinction is no more mutable or defeasible, than it is possible for one of the brute creation to advance itself to the rank of man *. And such is the division of the Hindoos into four great tribes or castes—the priests, the soldiers, the husbandmen or traders, and the servile class, whose sole assigned duty is to serve the other three †.

Now the evils that flow from such an arrangement, are infinite. Other modes of depotism lead in their very excess and abuse to a remedy, but here the chain of servitude is indissoluble and eternal. Though the highest orders be guilty of the most flagitious wickedness, pervert the use of power, become weak, arrogant and oppressive, the frame of society can suffer no change; that order must still continue in the enjoyment and exercise of all its vast privileges and prerogatives.

The lowest rank, on the contrary, is doomed to perpetual abasement and unlimited subjection. It has no relief against the most oppressive and insulting tyranny, no hope of ever escaping from its sufferings. Though permitted indeed to

* "The Brahmins, indisputably persuaded that "the superiority of their tribe is interwoven with "the very essence of their nature, esteem that "to be a full and satisfactory plea for every ad-"vantage settled on them above the rest of the "people." *Preface to the Code*, page 52.

† It is worthy of remark, that according to a tradition in Nepaul, reported by Captain Kirkpatrick in the ingenious work before-mentioned, Pusso-Pusp-Deo, a Rajah of that country, is said to have first divided the general mass of his people into the four grand and well known tribes of the present day. The chronological series of Nepaul princes, which Captain Kirkpatrick has been able to exhibit, and which, as he well observes, assigns to many of the reigns an extravagant duration, (making on the whole an average of more than forty years,) would give to Pusso-Pusp-Deo an antiquity of about three thousand years. Be that as it may, it is evident, that a tradition subsisting in Nepaul makes the first institution of castes an human appointment. A small secluded valley like Nepaul, environed on all sides with hills, is very likely to have been an early, if not an original seat of such an institution; and there are at least strong reasons for believing, that the Brahminical religion had not its first rise in the southern parts of Hindostan, if at all in that region.

to employ its industry, the greatest success can never in the slightest degree rescue it from inherent dishonour; and if the genius of a Newton should arise in that class, it could have no room to expand, nor if it had, could all its excellence deliver its possessor from the obligation of administering to the most ignorant and vicious of the Brahmins.

One of the heaviest grievances attending this state of degradation, is, that it discourages all liberal exertions, and consigns those who are destined to it, to ignorance, mean opinions of themselves, and consequent meanness of manners, sentiment, and conduct. Lest however, through the medium of learning, they should have a chance of emerging from this low and confined state, the Brahmins (by an ordinance of the Vedes, which through their imposture have the credit of proceeding from a divine origin, and of containing all valuable science) have forbidden them, on pain of death, to read the sacred books.

Now as this fourth tribe would naturally comprehend, at the very first, more than a fourth part of the people, and as the offspring of every subsequent, irregular commixture of the four original tribes, and all the descendents of that mixed race, fall by the law still lower than the fourth class, we may conclude that a large portion of the people is thus held down to earth. The evils inherent in this sort of distinction, (widely different it will easily be seen from mere gradation in society, because here essential superiority is entailed upon some classes, and essential inferiority upon others, for all generations,) extend in their degree to each of the intermediate classes, and the lowest feels the accumulated weight of general superiority. Those nearer the summit, become a cement to this system, which by allotting to them certain prerogatives, disposes them the more easily to acquiesce in it, and to support it.

Nothing is more plain, than that this whole fabric is the work of a crafty and imperious priesthood, who feigned a divine revelation and appointment, to invest their own order, in perpetuity, with the most absolute empire over the civil state of the Hindoos, as well as over their minds. It is true, that they assigned the reins of political government to another order, the Kheterees; but they still maintained in full exercise the indefeasible superiority of their own rank, they prescribed the rules of administration, they were the privileged advisers of the *Magistrate*, (as the sovereign, or ruler, is termed in the code,) they rendered themselves necessary to the man invested with that dignity, in his personal, as well as official capacity; and in the preliminary discourse to the code, we are told of a king, whom on his obstinate disregard of some ordinances of the Vedes, and of the counsel given by the Brahmins, they put to death. That "this resignation of the secular and executive power into the "hands of another caste, is a striking instance of the moderation of the Brahminical "order," cannot then be conceded to the translator of the code, for they secured to themselves all the power of the empire, but transferred the danger and trouble attendant on it to their inferiors; they retained all the advantages of secular pre-eminence, and divested themselves of all responsibility*.

To

* As some persons* appear disposed to think the institution of castes, and their separation by impassable barriers, the effect of profound political wisdom, it may be well for them to consider, whether it be possible to reconcile with the idea of true wisdom, that which derives both its origin and support from fraud and imposture; whether fraud and imposture can finally produce the fruits of truth and justice; and how far the supposed object of such policy, namely the good of society, is in fact fairly and solidly obtained by it. The subjection of one part to another is indeed secured; but is it good for the part so subjected, (infinitely the larger part of the whole,) and its numerous posterity, through all the successions of time, to be placed in bondage to the other? It seems difficult to maintain such an assertion by arguments, which will not also recommend, both in a personal and social view, the ancient system of slavery. That such a mechanical construction of society is not favourable to the external interests of a body politic, may be easily discerned: for what public principle can exist in a state, where the greatest part of the people are totally and for ever excluded, under the highest penalties, from taking any concern in public affairs. Some who have considered this subject philosophically, seem to rest the defence of such an arbitrary arrangement, upon a sentiment supposed to pervade the different classes, of the inviolability of each others rights†. Had a sentiment of that nature influenced them, the rights remained very unequal; but the truth is, that the same consequences follow which must ever be expected from unlimited power,—pride and tyranny on one side, abject servility and suffering on the other. And were it certain, as the translator of the code has intimated, "that long usage has persuaded the peo-"ple of the *equity* of their distinctions‡," this would be an additional proof of their minds and judgments being debased. Nothing is better known, than that the Brahminical tribe are pre-eminent in those

* See Dr. Robertsen's Ancient India. † Ditto - - - - - - - - page 264.
‡ Preface to the Code, page 11.

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To show how the singular species of despotism here described, pervades the legal system of the Hindoos, and to exhibit specimens of different laws, various passages from the code shall now be produced. Since it has, we trust, appeared, that the still remaining influence of that system is not to be ascribed solely to those parts of it which are sanctioned by British authority, we shall be justified in extending our view, and our selection, beyond them. And it will be recollected, on the other hand, that those parts include the laws which relate to the grand concerns of inheritance, marriage, and caste, besides others of inferior import; the severity only of some of the Hindoo punishments being discountenanced by our administration of criminal law. To one or other of those branches, the greater part of the ordinances now to be quoted, will be found to appertain; and for the introduction of others which do not belong to them, particular reasons, in addition to the general one already urged, will appear.

The specimens of laws to be adduced here, shall be arranged under the following heads:

First, Of those which determine some of the prerogatives, or duties, of the Chief Magistrate or Ruler.

Second, Of those which establish distinctions in favour of the superior castes.

Third, Of those which, without reference to castes, give a direct sanction to immoralities.

Fourth, Of those which, without reference to castes, go upon principles of oppression and injustice.

Fifth, Of those which, without reference to castes, discover a spirit of cruelty.

FIRST then, Specimens of Laws which establish some of the Prerogatives and Duties of the Chief Magistrate or Ruler.

Although no Hindoo can now exercise this office in our Eastern territories, these passages, few in number, are produced to show the arbitrary power with which the law invests the sovereign, and the abject submission which it imposes on his subjects. It may be remarked, that our tributary zemindars in the Carnatic, and even the great landholders in Bengal, have still retained some resemblance of this lordly authority over their people.

SOME of his PREROGATIVES.

Code, page 110. "He is not to be considered as *a mere man*, but as *a Dewtah*" (a subordinate deity, of whom they actually worship numbers.)

269. "If

those atrocities which disturb the peace of society: and this is but one branch of the mischiefs generated by such a system.

The subdivisions of the four original castes, arising from difference of professions, and a variety of separating distinctions, are now so many, the ways of contamination, (and therefore of purification,) so multiplied; stains or expulsions, on the one side, so terrible, and to those, on the other, who thereby succeed to property, so advantageous, that the subject of caste is a prodigious source of wrangling, animosity, litigation, loss of time, of property, and of peace, among the people, and of influence and emolument to the Brahmins, who are the arbiters in all these matters.

When these consequences are considered, together with that which must inevitably have been expected from the beginning, namely, the irregular commerce of the tribes, the political sagacity of the legislators of the Hindoos seems not entitled to great praise, since to every public benefit which they could propose from their system, the preservation of its simplicity appears to have been essential. And although a celebrated name* regards the institution of castes as a mark of considerably advanced society, there seems more probability in referring it to one of the earlier stages, in which there would indeed be priests, soldiers, and husbandmen, labouring and domestic servants, but the community would be small; and in such a community, an ordinance, apparently simple, fixing the several members and their families in the professions which they already exercised, might more easily be adopted and enforced. Had an ordinance of that nature been promulgated after the society was become numerous, and intermarriages, (not before prohibited), between persons of different professions, and between their descendants, had taken place; and when occupations had been multiplied, and various gradations already established, the difficulty of carrying it permanently into execution, would apparently have been insuperable.

* See Dr. Robertson's Ancient India.

269. " If in any place where the Magistrate is playing at tables, or any such " game, in that case if any person, without permission of the Magistrate, interposes " with his hand, or by speaking, *the Magistrate shall put him to death.*"

270. " If a man complains causelessly against the Magistrate's counsellor, *the* " *Magistrate shall put him to death.*"

" If a man performs any business or service for the Magistrate's accuser, " *the Magistrate shall put him to death.*"

" Men who vilify the Magistrate, men of *innate bad principles*, or men who " without reason, cause any internal uneasiness to others, (*of all which the Magistrate* " *himself must be the judge*,) the Magistrate shall banish all such the kingdom."

188. " If a man speak reproachfully of any upright Magistrate, the Magistrate " shall cut out his tongue; or having confiscated all his effects, shall banish him the " kingdom."

189. " If a Magistrate, *for his own good*, has passed any resolutions, whoever " refuses to submit to such resolutions, the Magistrate shall cut out the person's " tongue*."

207. " If a man beat or ill use a Magistrate *who commits a crime*, whatever it be, " the crime of murdering a hundred Brahmins shall be imputed to him; he shall have " an iron spit run through him, and be roasted with fire."

Note.—This contains an exception in favour of Brahmins, for *which see the next head.*

Some of his Duties.

Code, page 91. " A Magistrate *must have near him a learned Brahmin.*"

92. " The Magistrate is required to maintain *not less than ten Brahmins of* " *learning and worth*, to give them money, and every token of respect and consi- " deration in the judgment seat."

113. " *In all cases*, he shall spare and *excuse the Brahmins.*"

116. " He shall give much effects and money to the Brahmins of a conquered " country."

" And erect a stately building for them."

118. " He shall keep magicians *who can cure by spells.*".

" He shall keep a great number of buffoons, or parasites, jesters, and " dancers."

119. " If he resume a religious endowment, he shall remain in hell a thousand " years."

Second, Specimens of Laws, which establish Distinctions in favour of the Brahmins and the other Superior Castes.

First, concerning Authority.

Code, page 117. " The other three orders shall be obedient to the Brahmins†."

282. " Whatever

* In the Institutes of Menu, a work of great antiquity and curiosity, translated by Sir William Jones, since this tract was written, is the following description of the formation and dignity of the king:

" Since a king was composed of particles drawn " from those chief guardian deities, he conse- " quently surpasses all mortals in glory."

" Like the sun, he burns eyes and hearts; nor " can any human creature on earth even gaze on " him."

" He is fire and air; he, both sun and moon; " he, the god of criminal justice; he, the genius " of wealth; he, the regent of waters; he, the lord " of the firmament. A king, even though a child, " must not be treated lightly, from an idea that he " is a mere mortal; no, he is a powerful divinity, " who appears in human shape.—*Institutes of Menu*, page 159.

† The following passages in the Institutes of Menu are remarkable:

" Let not a king, though in the greatest distress " for money, provoke Brahmins to anger by taking " their property; for they, once enraged, could " immediately, by sacrifices and imprecations, de- " stroy him and his troops, elephants, horses, and " cars."

" Who, without perishing, could provoke those " holy men, by whom, that is, by whose ances- " tors, under Brahmá, the all-devouring fire was " created, the sea with waters not drinkable, and " the moon with its wane and increase?"

" What prince could gain wealth by oppressing " those, who if angry could frame other worlds " and regents of worlds, could give being to new " gods and mortals?"

" What man, desirous of life, would injure " those, by the aid of whom, that is, by whose " oblations,

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282. " Whatever ordinances Pundits, (who are Brahmins,) deliver to the Ryots, " (the body of the people,) from the Shaster, the great body of their ordinances, " civil and religious,) the Ryots (who cannot and dare not read the Shaster,) *are bound* " *to obey.*"

" A Pundit, not delivering the sentiments of the Shaster, to be fined two " hundred and fifty puns of cowries," (about four or five rupees, or ten shillings.)

261. " If a Sooder reads the Bedes to either of the other three castes, or *listens* " *to them, heated oil, wax, and melted tin, shall be poured into his ears, and the orifice* " *stopped up.*"

" If a Sooder gets by heart the Bedes, *he shall be put to death.*"

" If he always performs the jugg, (one of their modes of worship, in " which the Brahmin officiates,) he shall suffer death, or be fined two hundred ash- " ruffees," (about £. 300.)

Second, Concerning RESPECT.

Code, page 261. " If a man of inferior caste, proudly affecting equality " with a superior, shall travel by his side on the road, he shall be fined equal to " his abilities."

" If a Sooder sits on the carpet of a Brahmin, the Magistrate, having thrust " a hot iron into his buttock, and branded him, shall banish him the kingdom, or " else shall cut off his buttock."

Note.—The shadow of a Chandal, one of those degraded below the fourth caste, passing over victuals, milk, or even water, defiles it. Ten thousand other ways of being polluted by the lower ranks, mark their vileness*.

275. " Brahmins waiting upon great men, shall have free entrance."

" Being passengers in a boat, shall pay no fare, and have precedence."

" And shall pay for goods in a boat, no freight."

Third, Concerning CRIMES,—as ASSAULTS, &c.

Code, page 206. 283. " No crime whatever, nor any number of crimes, " shall forfeit the life of a Brahmin: *he shall not be put to death on any account* " *whatever.*"

" No crime in the world is so great as that of murdering a Brahmin; the " Magistrates shall never desire his life, nor cut off his limbs."

284. " A Brahmin murdering a Brahmin, or committing incest, shall be punished " only with ignominious branding."

206. " If a man deprive another of life, the Magistrate shall deprive that " person of life, except he be a Brahmin; *he* shall be fined a hundred gold mohurs," (about £. 150.)

207. " For

" oblations, worlds, and gods perpetually sub- " sist; those who are rich in the learning of the " Veda?"

" A Brahmin, whether learned or ignorant, *is* " *a powerful divinity*, even as fire is a powerful " divinity, whether consecrated or popular."

" Thus, although Brahmins employ themselves " in all sorts of mean occupations, they must in- " variably be honoured, for they are something " *transcendently divine.*"

" Of a military man who raises his arm vio- " lently on all occasions against the priestly class, " the priest himself shall be the chastiser, since " the soldier originally proceeded from the " Brahmin."

" A priest who well knows the law, needs not " complain to the king of any grievous injury; " since even by his own power, he may chastise " those who injure him."

" His own power, which depends on himself " alone, is mightier than the royal power, which " depends on other men; by his own might there- " fore, may a Brahmin coerce his foes."

" He may use, without hesitation, the power- " ful charms revealed to Atharvan, and by him to " Angiras; for speech is the weapon of a Brahmin, " with " with that he may destroy his oppressors."—*Institutes*, pages 285. 286. 311.

* " The abode of a Chandal and a Swapaca " must be out of the town; they must not have " the use of entire vessels; their sole wealth must " be dogs and asses. Their clothes must be the " mantles of the deceased; their dishes for food, " broken pots; their ornaments, rusty iron; con- " tinually must they roam from place to place."

" Let no man who regards his duty, religious " and civil, hold any intercourse with them; let " their transactions be confined to themselves, and " their marriages only between equals."

" Let food be given to them in potsherds, but " not by the hands of the giver; and let them not " walk by night in cities or towns."

" By day they may walk about for the purpose " of work, distinguished by the king's badges; " and they shall carry out the corpse of every one " who dies without kindred: such is the fixed " rule."

" They shall always kill those who are to be " slain by the sentence of the law, and by the royal " warrant; and let them take the clothes of the " slain, their beds, and their ornaments."

Institutes of Menu, page 295.

207. " For beating or ill-using a Magistrate, *who commits a crime*, (which the " first head rates as the crime of murdering a hundred Brahmins,) a Brahmin shall " only be fined a hundred ashruffees," (about £. 150.)

209. " If a man sets fire to another person's house, with intent to destroy him; " or causes him to take poison; or is desirous to murder him with a sword; or " carries away that person's wife from his house, and keeps her himself; or plunders " all that person's effects, or his tillage; in that case, if the latter deprives the former " of life, he shall not be amenable. *But he shall not kill either a cow or a Bramin,*" (consequently a Brahmin may do all this for a fine*.)

206. " With whatever limb a man strikes a Brahmin, *that limb shall be cut off.*"

" If a Sooder strikes either of the other three classes, *it shall be so done to* " *him.*"

208. " If a Sooder spit on a Brahmin, his lips, &c. shall be cut off."

" If a Sooder plucks a Brahmin by the hair, &c. both his hands shall be " cut off."

" If a Sooder gives much and frequent molestation to a Brahmin, *he shall* " *be put to death.*"

CRIMES continued—ADULTERY.

Code, page 242. " A Sooder, Bice, or Kheteree, guilty with a woman *of the* " *Brahmin caste, who has a master*, (that is a husband or keeper,) shall suffer death " by mutilation and burning."

" A Sooder, guilty with a Chandal woman, (one of a degraded tribe,) shall " suffer death."

" A Bice or Kheteree, guilty with a woman of inferior caste, to be fined " *five hundred* or *one thousand* puns of cowries," (from eight to sixteen rupees, sixteen to thirty-two shillings.)

" A Brahmin, guilty with a woman of any of the castes, *who has a master*, " to be fined *five hundred*, or *one thousand* puns of cowries (*eight* to *sixteen* rupees.) " He is not in any case of adultery, to be deprived of life."

243. " A woman, guilty with one of the inferior caste, to be eaten by dogs, or " burnt with faggots."

" A woman of equal or inferior caste, guilty, *shall not be liable to punish-* " *ment*, only she shall perform the ceremony of expiation."

244. " If a man commits adultery with an unmarried girl *of inferior caste,* " *by her consent*, he shall not be deemed guilty. If it was done *by violence*, the " Magistrate shall take a small fine from him."

248. " For crimes beyond this class, and beyond the line of the human species, " the superior castes are taxed in a fine of *five hundred* puns of cowries (about *eight* " rupees) the *Sooder only*, doomed to death."

CRIMES continued,—STEALING.

Code, page 220. " If a man steals any man of superior caste, *he shall be burnt* " *with fire*, by having a particular species of grass bound round his body. If he " steal a woman, he shall have that grass bound round his body, *be stretched out on* " *a hot plate of iron, and burnt in the fire.*"

" If a man steals a man or woman of middling caste, the Magistrate shall " cut off both his hands and feet, and cast him out upon a highway where four roads " meet."

" If any person *steals a man of inferior caste*, he shall be fined *one thousand* " puns of cowries," (about *sixteen* rupees or *thirty-two* shillings.)

" If he steals a woman of inferior caste, all his property shall be con- " fiscated."

" If a man, in time of war, steals a horse, or an elephant, the Magistrate " *shall deprive him of life.*"

" If he steals either of these animals in time of peace, the Magistrate shall " cut off from him one hand and one foot." (Compare this article with the preceding one concerning stealing a Sooder.)

" If

* The Institutes of Menu however, appear to permit to a man who cannot otherwise escape, the slaying of a Brahmin, who assails him with an intent to murder. Page 234.

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" If a man steals an elephant or a horse, excellent in all respects, the " Magistrate shall cut off his hand, and foot, and buttock, and *deprive him of life.*"

221. " If a man steals a small animal, the Magistrate shall cut off *half his foot.*"

224. " If a man steals flowers for dying, &c. the Magistrate shall cause the " article to be returned, and *take a coin of gold as a fine.*"

225. " If a man steals flowers, or fruit, or wood, or grass, *belonging to a Brahmin,* " the Magistrate shall cut off his hand."

226. " If a Brahmin who every day performs the jugg, commits a robbery " that deserves death, the Magistrate shall cut off the hair of his head."

Concerning the SCALE of PUNISHMENT, for scandalous or bitter Expressions, which species of offence will be further explained under a subsequent article, (Page 101.)

Puns Cowries

Code, page 182. " A man of equal caste *and equal abilities* with the " accused, shall be fined, - - - - - - - - - - 1,000
(about sixteen rupees, less than £. 2.)
" A man of inferior caste and *inferior abilities,* - - - - 2,000
" A man of superior caste and *superior abilities,* - - - 500
" An equal in caste and abilities, accusing another of one of the " crimes in anoo patuk, (the third class of this offence) - - - - 100
" An *inferior in caste and abilities,* ditto, - - - - - 200
" A *superior in caste and abilities,* ditto, - - - - - 50
(about *one* rupee.)

183. " A Sooder, accusing one of a superior caste of any of the crimes of the " three first classes, (which will be hereafter described,) shall have his *tongue cut* " *out, and a hot iron of ten fingers breadth thrust into his mouth.*" This article may be compared with the one immediately preceding. The Sooder forfeits his tongue, and in effect his life, for committing against a superior that offence, which, if a superior commit it against him, costs only half a crown; a fine so trifling, whilst the penalty of retorting on the other side is so dreadful, as rather to encourage than prevent this species of wrong in the upper ranks.

Concerning CIVIL AFFAIRS.

As to interest of money, the proportion of rates payable by the different classes, shall be introduced for the sake of illustrating the spirit of the code.

Code, page 2. " Where a Brahmin pays per month 1 per cent.
" A Kheteree shall pay - - - - - 1½
" A Bice (or Vyse) - - - - - - 2
" A Sooder - - - - - - - - - - 5
" And so in proportion whatever the rate is *."

PAYMENT of DEBTS.

Code, page 21. " If a very rich man, of *weak understanding* and of *a very* " *mean tribe,* from a principle of fraud and obstinacy refuses to pay his debts, the " Magistrate shall oblige him to discharge the money claimed, and *fine him double* " *the sum.*"

22. " If a very rich man, of *an excellent education and of a superior caste,* from " a principle of fraud and obstinacy refuses to pay his debts, and the creditor com- " mences a suit against him, the Magistrate shall cause the money in dispute to be " paid, and shall *fine the debtor one-twentieth* of the sum recovered."

As to TAXES on BUYING and SELLING.

Code, page 258. " On all sales. Inland purchase and sale 10 per cent.
" Foreign - 5 per cent. on the profit.
" A Brahmin, learned in the Bedes, *shall pay no tax on sales.*"

As

* The English government in Bengal has now ordained twelve per cent. per annum, to be the general legal maximum of interest, without distinction of castes or nations. Wealthy natives however, probably still favour borrowers of the higher castes.

As to FINDING THINGS.

Code, page 256. " A man finding *his own*, long lost, is *to inform the Magistrate*, " who is *to take from him*,

" If he be a needy unlearned person, *one-sixth*;

" If a man of science, - - - *one-half**."

256 " A learned Brahmin finding any thing, the property of a stranger who is " unknown, *takes the whole;* an unlearned Brahmin takes five-sixths, and gives one- " sixth to the Magistrate."

" A Kheteree is to give the Magistrate one-fourth, and the Brahmins one- " fourth."

" A Vyse is to give the Magistrate one-fourth, and the Brahmins one-half."

" A Sooder finding any thing, divides to the

" Magistrate, five-twelfths;

" Brahmins, five-twelfths;

" Himself, - two-twelfths."

" A Magistrate finding any thing, shall give one-half to the Brahmins, and keep " the other half himself."

As to GIFTS, and SUCCESSION to the PROPERTY of BRAHMINS.

Code, page 26. " A woman *may give to the Brahmins* any part of her husband's " effects *to procure his future happiness:* if she gives the whole, *the gift is approved,* " but *she* is blameable."

" A gift proposed to be given to a Brahmin, if afterwards withheld, shall be en- " forced by the Magistrate with interest."

33. " The property of Brahmins, *must always descend to Brahmins.*"

46. " So must the property of Brahmins' wives."

128. " On failure of heirs to one of the three lower castes, the Magistrate may " appropriate the property to himself."

" But if a Brahmin has no heir, his property shall pass to other Brahmins; " and if there are no Brahmins, the Magistrate shall cause it to be thrown into the " water †."

As to SLAVERY.

Code, page 143. " Slaves are made of the three castes of Kheteree, Vyse, and " Sooder.

" A Brahmin can never be a slave."

" A man of superior caste, if he is upright and steady in the principles of that " caste, can never be the slave of a man of inferior caste."

144. " If a Brahmin has purchased a Sooder, or even *if he hath not purchased* " *him, he may cause him to perform service.*"

These instances may suffice to illustrate the *nature of the distinctions* which obtain among the different castes. They extend indeed to all the concerns of life; and the laws regulating them are diffused throughout the code; make up a great part of it, and seem in reality to be its main business.

THIRD, Of those Laws, which without reference to Caste, give a direct Sanction to Immorality.

Concerning EVIDENCE, PROMISES, and FALSE PRETENCES.

Code, page 115. " Wherever a true evidence would deprive a man of his life, in " that case, if a false testimony would be the preservation of his life, *it is allowable to*

* So it is in the code, and the proportion in this instance seems to contradict the main principle of the law; but the striking point of comparison is, that a Brahmin, finding *what belongs to a stranger*, keeps the whole, or five-sixths of it; and another person finding *his own*, is obliged to give up a part of it.

† " Should the king be near his end, through " some incurable disease, he must bestow on the " priest all his riches accumulated from legal " fines." *Institutes of Menu*, page 286.

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" *to give such testimony*; and for absolution of the guilt of false witness, he shall per-
" form the *Poojah Sershuttee* (worship to Sershuttee, the Goddess of Letters): but
" to him who has murdered a Brahmin, or slain a cow, or who being of the Brahmin
" tribe has drunken wine, or has committed any of these particularly flagrant offences,
" it is not allowed to give false witness in preservation of life."

" *If a marriage for any person may be obtained by false witness, such falsehood may*
" *be told*; as upon the day of celebrating the marriage, if it is liable to be incomplete
" for want of giving certain articles, at that time, *if three or four falsehoods are*
" *asserted*, it does not signify; or if a man promise to give his daughter many or-
" naments, and is not able to give them, *such falsehoods as these*, if told to promote
" a marriage, are allowable."

" If a man, *by the impulse of lust*, tells lies to a woman; or if his own life
" would otherwise be lost; or if *it is for the benefit of a Brahmin; in such affairs*
" *falsehood is allowable*."

136.—" If a man says to another, I will give you something if you are able to
" apprehend a thief or a murderer, or such kind of criminals, then even if the
" other should apprehend and bring such a person, nothing shall be bestowed on
" that account. If any thing had been given before the business, it may be taken
" back."

19. 20.—" A creditor is repeatedly directed, by *feigned* and by *evasive* pretences,
" to get hold of some of the debtor's goods."

Introd. to the Code, page 114. " The Magistrate is directed to send to the
" party in hostility against him, a man of intelligence, and well skilled in artifice,
" to insinuate himself among the enemy's men, and make them dissatisfied with
" each other, that they may quarrel and fight among themselves, and so be
" ruined."

It will be remembered, that the two last articles are not supposed to describe merely the practice or the counsel of sinister human policy, but to be, like the rest, the dictates of a divinity.

Mode of Sharing among Robbers.

Code, page 129. " The mode of shares among robbers is this: If any thieves
" by the command of the Magistrate, and with his assistance, have committed de-
" predations upon, and brought any booty from another province, the Magistrate
" shall receive a share of one-sixth of the whole; if they received no command or
" assistance from the Magistrate, they shall give the Magistrate, in that case, one-
" tenth for his share; and of the remainder their chief shall receive four shares,
" and whosoever among them is perfect master of his occupation, shall receive
" three shares; also whichever of them is remarkably strong or stout, shall receive
" two shares, and the rest shall receive one share. If any of the community of the
" thieves happen to be taken, and should be released from the Cutchery Court upon
" payment of a sum of money, all the thieves shall make good that sum by equal
" shares."

This is in every view, a curious, characteristic article. The translator of the code maintains, that it " by no means respects the domestic disturbers of the tran-
" quillity of their country, or violators of the first principles of society, but only
" such bold and hardy adventurers as sally forth to levy contribution in a foreign
" province." It were to be wished the article itself had spoken as definitely; but suppose it to be thus understood. In the first place then, it sets before us, not an open military expedition, but a thieving, robbing, excursion; for the actors are " robbers, thieves, by profession," they are recognized to be of a " community of
" thieves," to be amenable for the depredations they have committed, to the civil court, and if taken, liable to punishment.

2d.—The Magistrate directs and assists these robbers and thieves to plunder in another province. It is a clandestine operation, and his concern in it must therefore be clandestine. Booty is the professed object, and he shares it with them.

3d.—As this regulation authorizes the procuring of a release from the court which may have seized any of these offenders, by the payment of a sum of money, it sanctions the concurrence of the Magistrate in such a transaction, which has strongly the complexion of being a private corrupt bargain between the judge of that court and

and the culprit; but whether the ransom be a secret bribe, or a more open commutation for punishment, the principles of justice are violated, the Magistrate becomes a party in a complicated outrage against society, and is in fact countenanced by this ordinance in being indulgent, in his turn, to criminals who may come into his power, for a pecuniary consideration.

4th. But it may be asked, how this "community of thieves," some "perfect "masters of their occupation," are formed and brought to such a state of perfection in their vocation?—Can we conceive it to be solely by the exercise of their parts in alien lands? Born, educated, and dwelling in the Magistrate's district, is it to be supposed that they never practise at home? Yet the Magistrate harbours these *banditti*, he knows them personally, and he sets them at work.

If the translator's apology be admitted, that this is an ancient law, correspondent to the early manners of other nations, still it is to be remembered, that it stands in a code which claims to be divine, that therefore an equal authority is necessary to its repeal, and that it is offered to us as a law of the Hindoos at this day.

But what are we understand by "another province:" if it means another state, Hindostan consisted anciently, as it does now, of many states. This law was made for the whole Hindoo people; therefore it authorizes and encourages them to rob and plunder each other. It recognizes a community of thieves and robbers in each state, and makes it lawful for them to live by depredations on their neighbours. Such accordingly has been the practice of at least smaller divisions, in all time past. The zemindars, throughout Hindostan, keep robbers and thieves under their protection; and whatever else has changed, the business of pillage, often attended with murder, still continues universally and systematically. Can it be doubted whether this ordinance has not had a most powerful effect in establishing and fortifying a practice so ruinous to the peace and good order of society? Must we not believe that robbers, finding their professions evidently recognized and sanctioned by the law, have thence with a quiet conscience formed themselves into castes and bands, and that it is the persuasion of acting upon the divine authority of the Shaster, which inspires them with contempt of death, and perseverance, from one generation to another? Can we suppose that our prohibition, and our punishment of predatory outrage, will in minds *prone* to them, destroy that persuasion? But the ordinance under consideration can hardly apply to any other than small divisions of territory: and if we were certain that "province" means the territory of another master, yet no fact is more notorious than that the bands of robbers whom the zemindars of Bengal are known to entertain, employ themselves within that country; for its "domestic tranquillity is disturbed by "them" perpetually from one end to the other, as the extract before quoted from Lord Cornwallis has evinced, and a variety of other vouchers might be produced, if necessary, to prove.

We see then a most glaring instance in this ordinance, of immorality in principle, and of the consequent wide diffusion of evil in practice.

To proceed to further examples.

SERVANTS committing Crimes by order of their MASTERS.—Divers Cases of Licentiousness.

Code, page 149. "If a servant, at the command of his master, *commits theft or* "*murder*, or any such crimes, in that case, *it is not the fault of the servant, the* "*master only is guilty.*"

239. "Adultery with common prostitutes and dancing girls, *shall not be finable.*"

247. "Several kinds of adultery allowed, *with consent of the Magistrate*, for the "trifling fine of ten puns of cowries," (less than a shilling.)

"If a man by violence commits adultery on his own slave girl, a fine of ten puns "of cowries," (about a shilling.)

151. "Prostitutes and dancing women:"—Cases stated, and decrees thereupon, including pimps, &c.

COMMISSION of a BAD ACTION allowed, to save life.

Code, page 271. "If a man in immediate danger of his life, *by committing a bad* "*action can save his life, in that case the Magistrate shall not fine him.*"

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Designing to Procure Death.

Code, page 268. "Performing a jugg (religious ceremony), to *procure the death of* "*an innocent person*, a fine of two hundred puns of cowries."

268. "Causing an innocent person to drink a potion, in order *to procure his* "*death*, a fine of two hundred puns of cowries."

Note.—They have great faith in both these expedients; intentional murder is therefore here rated at about ten shillings.

Concerning Gaming.

Code, page 254. "Games of chance are allowed *before the Magistrate*, or a "man belonging to him; the winner *to give half to the Magistrate*." This last clause explains the reason of prohibiting hazard, except *before the Magistrate*.

138. "A man may become a slave by loss on the chances of dice, or other "games."

Scandalous and Bitter Expressions.

This is a copious article in the code, and becomes such from a correspondent feature in the character of the people. Virulent, foul, criminating abuse, overflows among them in a manner probably unparalleled any where else in the world. No language but their own could describe its shameless nature, and the malicious persevering eagerness with which they lavish it upon each other.

The Hindoo law has therefore found it necessary to arrange the various topics of scandalous abuse under distinct denominations, expressive of the quality, or rank, of the crimes which it imputes.

This classification is curious: it places together offences of very unequal enormity; it distributes into the same division, moral and ceremonial pollutions; and thus tends to lessen the guilt of some heinous iniquities, and to confound all just ideas of morality. For instance, under the second denomination, or class of crimes termed *maha-putuk*, with the murder of a Brahmin and *incestuous adultery*, there appears *stealing eighty ashruffees*, (about £. 120.) *from a Brahmin*, and a Brahmin drinking wine. Under the third, with "the murder of a friend," and divers kinds of incestuous adultery, is conjoined, "*eating the victuals of the washerman's or any base* "*caste*." The fourth class termed *opoo-patuk*, which the glossary of the code explains to be "*small offences*," contains a large association of crimes, of which the following make a part.

Code, page 108. "Slaying a cow; adultery with the wife of another; performing the jugg to procure the death of any person; giving a philter to obtain an unwarrantable power; spoiling trees; eating victuals at the hands of an astrologer; a man's not paying his debts; stealing grain and metals, *except gold*; depriving a woman or a man of either of the three inferior castes, of life."

Petty assaults (see code, 191) are also frequent among these people, and proceed from the temper just described. They employ a large chapter of the code, in which a number of frivolous ridiculous cases, hardly fit to engage the attention of children, the offspring of superstition, pushed to endless punctilios, are stated. The punishment, though lighter in itself, proceeds in the same gradation, as that for scandalous imputations, of which the scale has been already given. But concerning these it may be observed, under this head, that there is surely a direct breach of moral propriety in taking "*abilities*" into the decision, especially by the superiority of ability to alleviate indecorous behaviour; yet this direction, very frequently occurs; and how is the superiority of ability to be ascertained? In this instance, as in numberless others, every thing is left to the judge.

Fourth, Of Laws which, without reference to Caste, go upon principles of Oppression and Injustice.

Of Inheritance.

Code, page 64. "A person born blind, deaf, or dumb, without a hand, a foot, or "a nose, &c.; whoever is of such general ill-behaviour, that his relations and "partners

" partners refuse to eat or drink with him; whoever is so incurably disordered as " that remedies have no effect upon him; a man afflicted with a consumption, &c; " whoever procures his subsistence by an unwarrantable business or profession; is " thereby incapacitated for inheritance."

Note.—The relations must probably be often interested in the succession.

Of Recovering Debts.

Code, page 19. " After other methods prescribed there to a creditor for recovery " of debt, fail, *he shall carry the debtor home with him* and detain him. If this " mode also fails, he shall by *feigned pretences*, endeavour to get hold of some of " the debtors goods. If he succeeds not here, and has no pledge, *he shall then* " *seize and confine the debtor's wife, children, cattle, buffaloes, horses, and such kind* " *of useful animals, also his pots*, (necessary for dressing his food,) *clothes, matts,* " *and furniture*; and seating himself at the debtor's door, there receive his money. " If even these methods prove unsuccessful, *he shall seize and bind the debtor's* " *person, and procure by forcible means*, (corporal punishment,) *a discharge of the* " *debt.*"

21. " If a man acknowledges himself indebted to another, and yet refuses to " pay, the creditor shall use the means above specified, to recover his money " *without hindrance or molestation from the Magistrate.* If the debtor should " lodge a complaint, the judge *shall fine him*, and cause the creditor to be " paid."

37. " If during the time of a famine, or for the execution of some religious " purpose, or on account of sickness, or to satisfy the importunate demands of a " creditor, who has proceeded so far as to seize his debtor, and *confine him with-* " *out victuals*, the husband should appropriate to himself his wife's property, *with-* " *out her leave*, he is justifiable, nor *is he obliged to return or repay* what is so " appropriated."

These regulations are limited by the following.

Code, page 20. " If a man lends money to a Magistrate, his own master, " or a Brahmin, he shall not be rude or uncivil in procuring payment."

23. " When a creditor procures his money by application to a Magis- " trate, he shall give him *one-twentieth* of the sum received, for his interpo- " sition."

270. " If a Magistrate's officer hath brought before the Magistrate any person " for any crime, and upon the Magistrate's examining that person, he should " deny the crime laid to his charge, then, even if a small offence be proved " against him upon a trifling crime, the Magistrate shall levy a *great* fine."

Fifth, Specimens of laws which, without reference to Caste, discover a Spirit of Cruelty.

Code, page 211. " A man killing a goat, horse, or camel, *except for sacrifice, to* " *have one hand and one foot cut off.*"

212. " A man always guilty of selling the flesh of dogs or jackalls, for goat or " stag flesh, *to have his hand and his nose cut off, and his teeth broke.*"

217. " A man selling white copper, &c. to counterfeit silver, the Magistrate " shall break the *hands, nose,* and *teeth*, of such person, and fine him a thousand " puns of cowries."

220. " A man stealing an elephant or horse, excellent in all respects, the " Magistrate *shall cut off* his *hand, foot*, and *buttock*, and *deprive him of life.*" (*Note.*—Stealing a *man* of *inferior caste* is rated at a fine of a thousand puns of cowries, as we have already seen.)

218. " A man frequently guilty of counterfeiting gold, *to be cut in pieces with* " *a razor.*"

But the cruelty of the Hindoo people appears in no way more evident than in the whole of the treatment to which *their women* are subjected in society, under the

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sanction and authority of the code. They are truly an unfortunate part of the community, and greatly to be pitied. Receiving no education, disposed of in marriage without having their consent asked, or knowing any thing of the person to whom they are to be given, they are immured for life, and made mere servants in the family of their despotic lord. If barren, or bearing only daughters, they are neglected; and not always released from oppression, even when death removes the husband; for they are then frequently reduced to the alternative of sinking into a state of infamy, or of burning themselves with his dead body.

The code expressly sanctions this inhuman and astonishing custom.

253. "It is proper for a woman, after her husband's death, to burn herself in "the fire with his corpse."

"Every woman who thus burns herself, shall remain in paradise with her "husband, three *crore* and fifty lacks (three millions and a half) of years."

This strong recommendation and injunction from a law-giver, believed to be divine, is of course admitted to have the force of a religious obligation; and it is one of those institutions of which the Brahmins are very tenacious. We are naturally led to inquire, what could have been the primary cause of an institution so horrid. The Hindoo writings, so far as they are known, seem to be silent on this head: but an explanation however offers itself, from the principle of the perpetual separation of castes, and the manners of the people. It was essential to that principle, that the castes should marry each within itself. In a few permitted cases, men of a higher caste might take a wife from an inferior one of the original four orders, and all the children were deemed of that to which the father belonged; but in no case was it allowed to a woman of a higher caste to marry with a man of a lower.

Mixed intercourses were therefore almost universally prohibited under penalties; and the offspring which, notwithstanding prohibitions, appeared from that source, was degraded below the fourth caste. But polygamy has always been practised among the Hindoos, especially among those of the higher orders; and the latter wives must infallibly, from the custom of the country, be considerably younger than the husband, and generally still young when he dies. A multitude of widows must thus soon arise in the community, and from the nature of the case, progressively encrease. Second marriages of women, appear to be unknown and repugnant to the Hindoo law and usages.

When a woman's husband therefore dies, she is reckoned an useless being, and what is worse, a dangerous one. The jealousy of the Eastern people has placed their honour in the conduct of their women, as being what touches them most. Not the husband himself only, but the whole family are stained by the misbehaviour of a wife; and if she degrades herself after his death, they are still affected by her dishonour. If she should bring other children by a man of inferior caste, she would introduce, more signally than any misconduct in a man could, that disorder and confusion into the society which would tend to break down the lines of separation between castes. But seeing the number of widows must always be great, and they have no effectual superintendent or protector, there must be a proportionable danger of such irregularity as would at length make the exceptions bear down the rule; and if mothers, as in many instances might thus happen, were to rear the children of a Sooder with those left by her former noble husband, the higher caste could not be preserved, during infancy, from defilements produced by eating and drinking, and touching what appertained to the other; nor could the son of a Sooder, brought up in this way, afterwards regard his Brahmin brother and companion with the veneration deemed indispensably requisite to be shown to that order.

How then, might it be said, shall the evils to be apprehended from this source, notwithstanding prohibitions and disgrace, be prevented? Let an ordinance, professedly divine, recommend to widows a voluntary departure with their husbands to paradise, under an assurance of enjoying there a very long succession of felicity; honour shall stimulate them to embrace this choice, and lest the love of life should still prevail, the fear of infamy shall compel them to die. Nor would this expedient appear as shocking to the Hindoos, as it does to us. Admitting the separation of castes to be a sacred institution, whatever tended to subvert it, might be obviated, not only lawfully, but as a matter of duty.

CHAP. III. *Causes of the present Situation and Character of the Hindoos.*

Women there have no concern in the education of their children after infancy; they cannot go abroad; the chief, if not the only way in which they are considered to be useful, terminates with the life of the husband; the code imputes to them the most depraved, impure, unsafe nature; they are ranked in the "*Bhagvad*" with those who are "of the womb of sin;" and it is believed that they are doomed to successive transmigrations, until they are regenerated in the body of a Brahmin. Vile therefore in their nature, and become useless and dangerous, to remove them from the earth, would be to study the preservation of order below, and to accelerate the course they have to pass through to a happier state. And thus there is a regular progress from the first stage of a false principle to a practical consummation that is tremendous.

Our supposition, that the original design of this institution was to prevent the dishonour and confusion of castes, appears to be confirmed by the terms of the ordinance in which it is delivered; for after saying that "it is proper for a woman "to burn herself in the fire with her husband's corpse," it adds, "*if she cannot "burn, she is to maintain an inviolable chastity.*" If *she remains always chaste*, she goes (still) to paradise, and *if she does not preserve her chastity*, she goes to hell *.

It is probable that though the ordinance speaks in general terms of any woman, the Brahmins might not mean its operation to extend beyond the higher orders, and might especially intend to preserve their own in all the distinction of purity necessary to maintain their authority. Among the lower castes it is seldom enforced. With the others, what was originally in part at least policy, is now superstition, or an honourable family distinction; and in this last view, the practice seems to have extended to other Eastern nations, who probably adopted it from the Hindoos. Expences and domestic inconveniences attend it, which may contribute to confine it to those alone, even of the superior castes, who are in better circumstances; but among persons of that description, happiness and misery, honour and infamy, the present and the future, are all urged as motives to destruction, with great and horrid success. The number of women thus annually destroyed in Hindostan, probably far exceeds the general conception of Europeans †.

As connected with this subject, it may be added in illustration of the cruel genius which pervades the Hindoo code, that the Vedes undoubtedly enjoin human sacrifices; that such were certainly formerly offered to Kallee, the Goddess of Destruction, one of whose terrific ornaments is a necklace of human skulls; and that there is reason to believe, that this infernal practice, though now publicly disused, has not yet entirely ceased ‡.

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* A paper in the fourth volume of the Asiatic Transactions, published long after this passage was written, exhibits a variety of decretory sentences from the Vedes and Shasters, relative to this subject, confirming in general the view of it here given. *Asiatic Transactions*, Vol. IV. page 209.

† No judgment can be formed of the number, from the transactions of this kind, occasionally seen about English settlements; by far the greater part takes place in the interior of the country, out of the view and intelligence of foreigners. Roger, a writer of great credit in the last century, relates that the *Kheterees* compelled their women to burn, reckoning it a disgrace if their wives were not laid on the funeral pile with them; and that during his residence at Paliacatta, a man of distinction of that caste dying, *sixty* of his wives were burnt alive with his corpse. A Hindoo of education stated to a friend of the writer, his conjecture that the victims thus annually burnt in the Bengal provinces, amounted to fifteen thousand. The calculation indeed seems excessive; yet if we adopt moderate data, the result will be enormous. Hindostan has been estimated to contain a hundred millions of inhabitants, and at least one-tenth of these to be Mahomedans. In the more opulent families of the three *inferior* original tribes, particularly the Kheterees, the practice in question is occasionally followed. Suppose then the four original tribes to make up two-thirds of the Hindoos, that is, sixty millions, the Brahmin families, with a small proportion of the Kheterees, and a few of those belonging to the other two tribes, to constitute a tenth part of the four original tribes, or six millions, the heads of families in this number to be one-sixth, or one million, the deaths of these annually, one in thirty, and (and a plurality of wives being in many of these families) one woman only to be burnt for each, the number annually sacrificed in Hindostan will then be about thirty-three thousand.

These data are all hypothetical and have little certainty; but let the proportion be reduced to the lowest probable scale, the annual immolation of human victims to a dire superstition, will still appear an enormity under which language must sink.

The principle alone, however, is so dreadful, that it needs not the aid of numbers to shew its atrocity.

‡ When Mr. Elliot, deputed by Mr. Hastings in 1777 to the Rajah of Berar, had advanced into the country, between that prince's capital and our territories, a young man presented himself, and solicited leave to travel under the protection of his suite; on being asked his reason, he replied he understood the rajah or zemindar of a district, before them, offered every year a human sacrifice, and generally seized some stranger passing by at that time.

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One article more shall close the elucidations from the Hindoo code.

Code, page 274. "In cases where it is ordered, a man shall be put to death, "instead thereof he shall pay one hundred ashruffees, (about £. 150); and where "it is specified that one of his hands, or one of his feet, shall be cut off, instead "thereof he shall pay fifty ashruffees; and instead of having two of his fingers cut "off, he shall pay twenty-five ashruffees; so also, when banishment from the king-"dom is his sentence, instead thereof he shall be fined twenty-five ashruffees."

"Men of *rank*, or *good principles*, or *learning*, committing such a *crime as to* "*deserve capital punishment*, if they are not men of property, the Magistrate shall "take less than one hundred ashruffees, according to his fortune."

"If a Brahmin who hath always acted in conformity to the Bedes, commits such "a crime as to deserve capital punishment*, the Magistrate, to prevent him in future "from the commission of such crimes, shall confine him in perpetual imprisonment." (No heavy punishment to a Hindoo, to whom indolent inactivity is a species of enjoyment.)

From what has been stated in the former part of this chapter, it will be understood that the ordinances quoted under this last article, as relating to criminal law, are not now a rule of judgment in our territorial courts, but they are introduced here for the sake of illustrating the genius of the Hindoo code. At first sight, they seem to diminish the cruelty of that code. They only afford however, a fresh and striking demonstration of its injustice and venality.

The best apology for a severe system of laws would be, that they were impartially administered. But here is an office of indulgence set up to the rich, and the pecuniary rates fixed at which they may commit crimes worthy of death. On the poor, who cannot perhaps raise one ashruffee, the laws must still have their course; and thus it becomes evident, that their steady object is not the prevention of offences, and that their remissions do not proceed from clemency; but that there is in the dispensation of punishments, a scandalous partiality in favour of rank and wealth, and a palpable regard to the emolument of the Magistrate. Indeed pecuniary fines are one great object of the code; they occur perpetually, the law is so loosely delivered that in personal disputes almost every thing is left to the discretion of the Magistrate, and one sure issue of them is his private advantage.

From this brief inspection of the Hindoo code, a tolerable adequate idea of its genius, in points upon which the happiness of society essentially depends, may be obtained. The articles which have been selected, are such as do not take their character from the light wherein they are placed, from forced constructions, or extraneous circumstances; their real nature, their intrinsic quality, their conformity or repugnance to the fair unalterable standard of good and evil, is evident. It cannot certainly have escaped attention, that the immorality, the injustice, and the cruelty of the code, are by no means confined to the instances which have been adduced under these heads, respectively, but appear in glaring colours in the numerous regulations which have been quoted, in reference to that wide and important subject, the distinctions in favour of the superior tribes. Actions are indeed often estimated, not according to their intrinsic good or evil, but according to the relation they have to caste.

Immoralities of every description are tolerated on easy terms to one part of the society, and some of the most atrocious kinds are permitted without reprehension, that is to say, have all the encouragement which a legal sanction can give them.

An unfeeling barbarity also runs through the punishments of the code; it defends sanguinary inflictions; and the translator, who is usually its apologist, acknowledges, that its "various modes of capital retribution contradict the general opinion adopted "in Europe, that the Gentoo administration was wonderfully mild, and averse "to the deprivation of life." If such an opinion has ever been general in the West, it was plainly a gross prejudice, and may show the necessity of paying more attention than has hitherto been given to the character of this people, in order to know it.

Of

* The implied consistency of these two suppositions deserves to be remarked.

Of the effects produced upon a feeble, ignorant, superstitious people, by such a departure from the genuine principles of equity, truth, honesty, purity, benevolence, peaceableness, and good order, in a word, by such a standard of morals as these laws, professing the authority of a divine appointment, establish, it cannot be difficult to judge. It is a maxim so plain as not to be mentioned without apology, that a corrupt rule, must produce a practice still more corrupt, since no higher point of perfection being aimed at, and a progressive degeneration common to all establishments, the spirit and manners of the people, if seasonable reforms are not interposed, will in time become generally vicious.

But other causes have essentially co-operated in the formation of the Hindoo character; these are to be found in that part of their complex system which is purely Religious, and of which we next proceed to give some account.

So great an undertaking as a general or systematic exposition of the Hindoo religion, is not here intended. All that is proposed or thought necessary, is only a view of some of its tenets and institutions, which have a direct influence upon the morals and sentiments of the people; and these shall be presented under the five following heads:

First, Ceremonial and pecuniary atonements.
Secondly, Doctrines relating to transmigration.
Thirdly, The characters of the Hindoo deities.
Fourthly, Modes of worship.
Fifthly, Superstitious opinions, immediately affecting the conduct of the Hindoos in common life.

In the first place then, concerning that grand article, *the expiation of the guilt of sin*; the Hindoos are taught to have recourse to various ceremonial works and observances, and confidently to depend on these for absolution: real contrition and amendment, hatred of evil, and a respect to the holiness of the divine nature, do not appear to enter into their consideration of this subject. The whole is reduced to certain external performances; and in the Vedes, there are long enumerations of sins, that is to say, of offences against morality, and every species of offences which men can commit, with the particular expiation prescribed for each*. In general, these

* Ayeen Akberry, Vol. III. page 252.—Roger, pages 262, 267.—Sonnerat, Vol. I. pages 220, 273, & seq.—Religious Ceremonies, Vol. VI. pages 190, 221.—Baldæus, in Churchill's Collection, Vol. III. page 785.—Bernier, Tome II. page 121.—Herbert's Travels, page 334.—Bhagvad Geeta, page 46 et seq.—But see more particularly the Institutes of Menu, published since this tract was drawn up, Chap. II. pages 307, 343. The professed business of this chapter is to treat of *penance and expiation*. The efficacy of expiatory penance is laid down as a general principle or doctrine.

"Some of the learned, consider an expiation as "confined to involuntary sin; but others, from "the evidence of the Veda, hold it effectual even "in the case of a voluntary offence."

"A sin involuntarily committed, is removed by "repeating certain texts of the scripture; but a "sin committed intentionally, through strange "infatuation, by harsh penances of different "sorts."

After employing near thirty pages in describing various crimes, many of the deepest dye, and the performances by which atonement for them, if they are publicly known, and thence mischievous by their example, may be made, we meet with some sentences which speak of open confession, repentance, loathing of the sin committed, and abstinence from it. If the most favorable construction be put upon these expressions, what are a few such glimmerings of mental religion, amidst a heap of ceremonial observances, painful or ridiculous? They are overwhelmed and lost in a mass of false principles and senseless practices. They are indeed superseded and contradicted by the general tenor of this very chapter, and by the doctrine of penances; for no hint is any where given that the expiations and sacrifices prescribed in the Vedes are emblematical or typical, the plain and obvious sense of the precepts which enjoin them is that they really atone for sin. "*By these penances*," says the legislator, to quote the conclusion of his impositions for one species of offence, *may a twice-born man* (one of the three "superior castes) *atone for the guilt* of theft." So with respect to secret sins, "the man who desires "to expiate his secret sins, great and small, must "repeat once a day, for a year, the text *ava* or "the text *yatcinchida*. Though he have com-"mitted many secret sins, he shall be purified by "repeating for a month the text *somarandra*, or "the three texts *aryamna, while he bathes in a "sacred stream*: or if he thrice repeat a *sanditá* "of the Vedas, or a large portion of them, with "all the *mantras* and *brah'manas*, dwelling in a "forest with subdued organs, and purified by three "*páracas*, (a total abstinence for twelve days and "nights,) he shall be set free from all sins, how "heinous soever." If some of the Brahmins should have juster views of the evil of sin, and of the necessity of moral purity, we may be assured that the bulk of the people, from whom even the contents of the Vedes are carefully concealed, rest in the external forms which are prescribed to them. So it has happened in various parts of Europe, amidst more general knowledge, and a light truly divine. Men have turned aside from that light, and resorted to inventions of their own, to penances, pilgrimages, indulgences, and supererogatory works; which being corruptly grafted upon a sytem in itself altogether pure and complete, have thence reconciled the practice of allowed sin, with the hope of pardon and of heaven.

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these expiations consist in pilgrimages, in living and dying in places reputed holy, in ablutions, in penances, in the celebration of festivals, in fasts, in largesses to Brahmins, in sacrifices and offerings to idols, in anointing the body with the excrements of a cow, and in other expedients of a similar nature.

It would far exceed the limits of this treatise, to enter into a detail of the methods adopted among the Hindoos for obtaining remission of sin. Besides those which the authority of the Vedes, or general usage has established, there are many other inventions, imposed by teachers individually upon their respective followers:—a few examples however shall be stated, of those which fall under the former description.

I. Holy Rivers, dedicated to one or other of the deities, Brahma, Vishnow, or Mahadeo, may be mentioned in the first place. There are twenty-eight of them named in the Ayeen Akberry, beginning with the *Ganges*, and traversing the whole continent to the *Indus*; so that all the professors of Hinduism are within reach of an antidote against the consequences of guilt. Each of these rivers has some peculiar property ascribed to it, and many places upon the banks are held sacred, and annually resorted to.

The virtues of the river *Ganges* are universally allowed to be pre-eminent;—the water of it assuredly purifies from all sin. Ablutions in it are used continually for this end, as Europeans daily see; and the dying, when within a moderate distance of it, are carried to its edge, and their feet are placed in the river, that thus they may have a happy passage out of life. Its water is conveyed to distant parts for the same purposes; and if persons confiding in its virtue are not within reach of it, thinking of it and invoking it, when they bathe in any other water, will still give them all the efficacy of it. This river is believed to have flowed down from Heaven; hence its transcendent excellency.

II. Holy Places*, dedicated to the same deities, are also spread through all parts of Hindostan. Some of the most distinguished are the following.—The city of *Kashee*, or *Benares*, with the district around it for ten miles. It is held that those who die here are transmitted immediately to Heaven. The celebrity of this city, and the continual resort to it of pilgrims, are well known.

Ayoda, or *Owde*, is another sacred region of considerable extent, hallowed by the birth of Rama, one of the most popular deities of the Hindoos.

Metra, with a territory around, is famous for the birth of Crishna, another of their distinguished deities.

Herdewar, where the Ganges falls into Hindoston, a place of great annual resort.

Ellahbass, formerly *Pyag* or *Prayaga*, at the confluence of the rivers Jumna and Ganges. This place is esteemed superlatively holy; the man who dies there, not only has the pardon of all his sins, but it is said, that whatever he wishes for, he will obtain in his next regeneration; and there also *suicide*, though in general thought by the Hindoos to incur future punishment, is deemed meritorious.

"The Hindoos," says Abul Fazel† "regard all *Cashmere* as holy land. Forty-"five places are dedicated to Mahadeo, sixty-four to Bishen or Vishnow, three to "Bramha, and twenty-two to the goddess Durgah. *In seven hundred places, there* "*are carved figures of snakes which they worship.*"

Cashmere is about two hundred and forty miles in length, and thirty-five in breadth.

The famous Pagoda of *Jaggernaut*, in *Orissa*, is another place of great sanctity. It is alleged that the body of Chrishna was carried there, by an inundation of the sea, from Dowarka, near Surat, formerly a station of distinguished fame and resort. At Jaggernaut, a Brahmin, who would every where else be defiled even by the touch of a Sooder, may receive, without the least stain, victuals from his hands.

There are many more such places of great resort in the Decan, and the northern parts of Hindostan. Rules are laid down for every pilgrimage to them, and various rewards promised to those who perform them‡.

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* Ayeen Akberry, page 255.
† Ibid. - - Vol. II. page 156.
‡ Ayeen Akberry, Vol. III. page 254.

Not only are pilgrimages held beneficial, both to the soul and to the body, but such is the virtue ascribed to the sanctity of the sacred places, that by *naming them only*, men receive the remission of their sins; and on that account great persons, who are somewhat solicitous on this score, run over the names of the principal of them every morning, as it they repeated a prayer; so that where a pilgrimage cannot be conveniently undertaken, yet the benefit may thus be secured*.

III. Sacrifices, Offerings, and Festivals, are celebrated at particular periods, and by the different castes in their respective forms. These are deemed eminent means of obtaining absolution from guilt.

IV. Almsgiving is prescribed in various ways, for the remission of particular crimes, or the obtainment of particular favours†. The Dan-Poojah, a religious ceremony, in which by many fantastic modes, costly presents are bestowed, is conceived to be followed by prodigious rewards in a future state.

V. Endowments to the Brahmins, to Pagodas, &c. are all esteemed highly meritorious, and the variety and extent of these cannot be described. A large portion of the lands of Hindostan has been transferred, by means of them, into the hands of the Brahminical order.

VI. Rigorous Penances, procure the pardon of some species of offences particularly enormous.

VII. Methods are likewise devised for the *benefit of those who have not been sufficiently careful during their own lives to ensure the pardon of their sins*, by which their friends who survive, are enabled to be highly useful to them. The body or the bones of the deceased being thrown into the Ganges, temporary happiness at least is procured to the soul, and the advantage of such a condition in another transmigration as shall at last bring it to Heaven. At Gaya, a famous resort of pilgrims in Bahar, there is a particular stone on which the god Vishnow set his foot; and a person by putting on this stone, in the form prescribed, a certain paste prepared there, and by repeating at the same time the name of a deceased friend, can transfer that friend from hell itself to supreme felicity. And this benefit he may extend, not to one friend only, but by repeated applications of paste, to as many as he can recollect, even of his distant connections.

VIII. Works of Supererogation, to procure distinguished eminence in the heavenly world, are also exceedingly numerous, and many of them altogether astonishing. An account of them would fill a volume; and a few instances, however striking, would give but an inadequate idea. The hideous painful distortions, and tormenting inflictions to which the Joguis subject themselves, till life is wasted away, would be perfectly incredible if they were not so abundantly attested, and yet seen, by many who visit those countries. They afford new proofs of what the human mind can invent, and the body endure, in the way of torture, under the influence of superstition. There is reason however to believe, that this species of zeal rather declines in the present day.

But though the painful details which it furnishes must be spared, it would be injustice to the present subject not to mention that divers kinds of suicide are held by the Hindoos to be meritorious. These, as stated in the institutes of Akber, are five in number. "1. Starving. 2. Covering himself with cow-dung, and, setting it on "fire, consuming himself therein. 3. Burying himself in snow. 4. At the extre-"mity of Bengal, where the Ganges discharges itself into the sea, through a thousand "channels, he goes into the water, enumerates his sins, and prays till the aligators "come and devour him. 5. Cutting his throat at Allahabad, at the confluence of "the Ganges and the Jumna." To this last species of suicide, performed at appointed times, such as eclipses of the sun and moon, great stores of wealth are promised in the next state‡.

In short, the modes of expiating guilt, and of acquiring merit, are endless among this people. To accomplish this end, is the business of all their vast train of ceremonies, services and external performances; it is the very thing that has upheld the

* Roger. † Ayeen Akberry, page 174. ‡ Ayeen Akberry, pages 274. 174.

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the fabric of Hindoo superstition, and has perpetuated the credulity of the multitude, and the impostures of their priests: even the *Bhagvad*, the purest production of Hindoo theology, proceeds upon the same principles for the remission of sin. The ingenious Translator, upon whose authority it has been stated that this work is carefully concealed from the vulgar, also observes that the great ignorance in which they are kept, contrary to the better knowledge of at least the more enlightened of the Brahmins, supports, together with the ceremonies of the Vedes, the consequence, and the very existence of the Brahminical order. But although the *Bhagvad* refines upon the popular system, and contains some moral passages, with others, which though mystical, have respect to the intention of the mind in religious worship; yet it palpably admits polytheism and idolatry, and inculcates such pitiable and pernicious doctrines as the following:

"Those who eat not but what is left of the offerings, shall be purified from all "their transgressions. Some attend to the worship of Devatas or angels; others "sacrifice their ears and other organs in the fire of constraint. There are also the "worshippers with offerings, the worshippers with mortifications. Some there are "who sacrifice their breathing spirit, and force it downward from its natural course, "whilst others force the spirit that is below, back with the breath. *All these "different kinds of worshippers, are by their particular modes of worship, purified "from their offences**."

An intelligent friend of the writer expresses himself thus in a late letter from Calcutta. "One day at a Brahmin's house, I heard a wonderful man, a Poorannee "(a reader of commentaries on their sacred books,) explaining their Shasters. He "frequently made the people burst into tears, and weep aloud. Whenever their "passions were touched with any pathetic passage, the man obtained several rupees, "thrown to him both by Brahmins and Sooders, only the latter attended their "donations with a *pernaum*, or act of worship to the Poorannee. The Sooders, "you know, are taught to worship the Brahmins, and they do it by *pernaum*, that "is, touching the ground with their heads while they pronounce the word, then the "Poorannee holding out his hand in a convex manner, says *isho*, i. e. *come*, amount-"ing to "thy sins be forgiven thee," for by "come" they mean to call all the sins "on the neck of the Sooder to the hollow of their hand, where a mystic fire "consumes them. The Brahmins are the true idols, while they carry about with "them the powers of absolution, and to break off their yoke will not be easy. One "evening I went to Kallee-Ghaut (a temple of Kallee), at the time of the Arutee, "which is performed by the moving of a lamp with several wicks about the face of "the goddess. When the operation was over, a Brahmin brought up the lamp, "and walked through a passage lined with poor Sooders on each side, who anxiously, "as he passed, put their hands for a moment over the flame before it went out, in "order to procure the remission of their sins *for that day*."

Upon the whole then it appears, that the Hindoos pursue methods of obtaining pardon of sin without regard to the disposition of the mind, or the conduct of life on their own principles. They may go on committing wilful offences every day, and as regularly wiping them off, and die at last pure and in peace, and pass through the water of the Ganges to happiness in a new state. For the violations of conscience, which though smothered is not extinct†; for the disregard of truth, of justice, and of mercy, their system has enabled them, without making any the slightest compensation to men, to give sufficient satisfaction to their gods‡. To them they pay a certain quit-rent, or acknowledgment, for liberty to do whatever their inclination and ability may prompt them to, as far as their fellow creatures are concerned. Can we hesitate to say what must be the effect of such principles on their character? Among such a people, crimes must prevail. True it is, and greatly

* Bhagvad-Geeta, page 55.

† "If having performed any expiation, he feel "not a perfect satisfaction of conscience, let him "repeat the same devout act, until his con-"science be perfectly satisfied."—*Institutes of Menu, On Expiation*, page 339.

‡ This is spoken of their practical system. In a passage of the work just quoted (page 330) it is said that "the penitent thief must always restore "the goods that he stole." But besides that neither restitution nor penance can satisfy the offended justice of God, this seems to be spoken only of those who literally, by the act of stealing, subduct the property of others. It ought certainly to apply to all dishonest agents and traders, but is probably not so understood; if it be, surely no precept was ever less observed. The banks of the Ganges afford every day the sight of multitudes of worshippers of different lines of business, who are in the habitual practice of cheating, and never think of restitution.

greatly to be lamented, the prevalence of crimes is no new thing, nor peculiar to them. The ancient world exhibited a picture of the same kind; and to the dishonour of the Christian name, in countries nearer home, that pure religion has been changed into a mystery of imposture and corruption. But though it must be said, that the light which overspreads Europe, has prevented the same degree of effect from the system of delusive fraud still practised there, yet have not the consequences been infinitely prejudicial to those countries where it has prevailed; and is not that system likely, in the end, to dissolve the frame of society in them?

SECONDLY, The DOCTRINE OF TRANSMIGRATION, and others connected with it, universally received among the Hindoos, have great influence upon their modes of thinking and acting, and serve to weaken their sense of moral obligation. The Hindoos are taught to believe that their present corporeal habitation, and earthly sufferings, whatever they may be, result from their actions in a former state; and that there are inherent original qualities in the constitution of man, *from which* all his good and all his evil actions proceed. From these tenets it follows, that the commission of crimes is the result of *destiny*, and yet that they are punished; and that natural evils, the consequences of personal misconduct, will be regarded as the chastisement of offences to which destiny compelled the sinner in a former state. Thus ideas are introduced of original injustice, of arbitrary destination to sin, and to punishment, in the constitution of things; and offences bear the character of misfortunes rather than of guilt. It is very common to hear a criminal answer, when he is asked how he could be guilty of such atrocity, "that it was his *nusseeb*," his fate. The same persuasion extends to the success of men in life, particularly of warriors and conquerors; and he who has once got the opinion of a happy destiny in his favour, will from that very prejudice, achieve things which a contrary opinion might have rendered impracticable to him.

The doctrine of transmigration tends likewise to weaken the idea of future responsibility. It unites the soul sometimes to the human form, then again to one of the lower animals, in which, even according to the Hindoo notions, there is an incapacity for the exercise of rational powers, and a want of a moral sense: it likewise supposes the consciousness of former states of existence to be lost. Hence there is no sense of personal identity, no suffering from the reflection of past crimes, no real perception of the reasons of suffering; but merely passive temporary endurance. It is true the Brahmins have an art by which they profess to discover the former state and character of persons, by their present sufferings; but the existence of such an imposture does not invalidate these observations, since with whatever credulity it may be regarded by a Hindoo, it cannot impart to him the conscious knowledge of experienced truth. Its chief object seems to be money, and as it affords a curious specimen of the subjection into which the human mind may be brought, some notice of it shall be taken hereafter.

The Hindoos, indeed, entertain such inadequate and obscure apprehensions of a future state of punishment, and have so many ways of fortifying themselves against them, that their moral conduct is little influenced by fear derived from that source.

One of the notions which they have acquired from the doctrine of transmigration is, that some departed spirits may be doomed to whirl for ten days after death, like devils, in the air, suffering from hunger and thirst; and therefore during that space, after funerals, victuals are laid out for the birds, that the unhappy deceased, if they are floating in the airy regions, may partake of the food. On the other hand there is a happy state, to which the *course* of transmigrations may convey men, to the court of *Indra*, God of the Firmament, "where," says Sir William Jones, "the "pleasures, as in Mahomed's paradise, are wholly sensual."

But even he who is arrived at paradise is not secure; for the omission of certain ceremonies, or oblations to the manes of deceased ancestors, by the *descendents* of those no longer in a state of probation themselves, is dreadfully fatal, "precipi- "tating the unhappy persons into *nark*, or hell, thence to be borne again into the "bodies of unclean beasts, until by successive regenerations, all sins are done away*." These offerings, which come under the denomination of sheradha, are made by some daily, by others monthly and annually; and the manner of performance is thus explained in the Ayeen Akberry †. "*He gives to the Brahmins*, money, goods, and "food, dressed and undressed, in the name of his father, grandfather, and great- "grandfather,

* Notes to the Bhagvad. † Vol. III. page 231.

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" grandfather, and of his mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother." The principle upon which they proceed, is that of increasing the welfare, solace, and enjoyment of departed progenitors; the real effects are to provide a stated succession of sacrificial entertainments for the Brahmins, to add to the ceremonial burthens and superstitious terrors of the people, by threatenings of dreadful consequences, as well to those who omit these rites, as to the spirits of the deceased, who are thus neglected.

What suitable ideas of spiritual happiness and of divine justice can a people, adopting such a practice, possess; and how must it discourage virtuous exertion to think, that all may be *undone after the death of the performer*, by the carelessness of another person!

THIRDLY, The CHARACTER of the WHOLE MULTITUDE of HINDOO DEITIES, male and female, is another source of immorality. The legends and histories of their actions are innumerable, and in the highest degree extravagant, absurd, ridiculous, and incredible. But the feature by which they are, above all, distinguished, is the abandoned wickedness of their divinities, Brahma, Vishnow, Mahadeo, (who are held to be respectively the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer of the world,) and of all the rest, in their several subordinate capacities. The most enormous and strange impurities, the most villanous frauds and impostures, the most detestable cruelties and injustice, the most filthy and abominable conceits, every corrupt excess and indulgence, are presented to us in their histories, varied in a thousand forms. These scandalous legends are more or less known among all the millions of Hindostan; they form an immense series of adventures, which fill the imagination of a weak and credulous people; very many of them are perpetuated by images, temples, and ceremonies, and those of such a nature as it were pollution to describe. Representations which abandoned licentiousness durst hardly imagine within the most secret recesses of impurity, are there held up in the face of the sun to all mankind, in durable materials, in places dedicated to religion; nay, they are the objects of religious adoration, and miniatures are taken from them and worn by multitudes about the neck*. Is it conceivable that the senses and imagination of the people, especially of the youth, should not be utterly depraved by such representations; or that all feelings and ideas of natural modesty should not be confounded and extinguished by them? What then must be the effect when religious influence is superadded?

If such indecent exhibitions as are now forbidden by the law in this country, were to be presented to public view with the highest honour, in lofty and elegant edifices, appropriated by the legislature for that purpose, and all ranks, sexes, and ages, were encouraged to resort to them; if religious merit were added as a further encouragement; and if the practice were to be permanent; what would be the effect upon the general manners? A great revolution in all ideas of modesty, chastity, continence, and decorum; the exclusion of sentiment and virtue. Of all these, nothing would be left, but the consideration of what custom had prescribed, and positive institution had forbidden, as to exterior demeanor and conduct. Such is the state of the people of Hindostan as to these points: there is a discernible absence of our feelings and opinions of propriety and decorum in what regards the sexes, a grossness in their language, manners, and ideas, which (whatever allowances are to be made for the differences of eastern or of ancient habits of life) is best to be accounted for by tracing it to this source. There is a certain modesty which seems to be inherent in the constitution of the human mind; traces of it are to be seen in the rudest hordes still uncorrupted; it is positive corruption that destroys it; and the usages of the Hindoos must therefore be an effect, as well as a cause of depravity.

Nor are these which have been enumerated, the only ways in which the Hindoo mythology influences the manners of the people. He who wants to glut his revenge, knows where to address himself to a patroness, Kali (or Kalee), the Goddess of Destruction, has still many votaries; and the Vedes afford examples of sacrifices and tremendous incantations for the destruction of enemies. The robber also, when about to issue forth against the person and the property of his neighbour, propitiates his

* Ceremonies Religieuses, Tome VI. passim.—Roger, page 157.—Voyage de Gentil, Tome I. page 163.—Voyage de Sonnerat, Vol. I. page 41 & 175.—Hamilton's Travels, Vol. I. page 379. Pietra della Volle, page 55, &c.—Sir William Jones, in the first Vol. of the Asiatic Transactions, page 254.—Baldæus, in Churchill's Collection, Vol. III. passim.—Nieuhoff, in Ditto, Vol. II. page 184.—Fryer's Travels, page 179, &c.

his tutelar deity for a successful expedition. We have seen from the code, that the practice of offering worship and sacrifices, in order to compass the death of another, is known to the law. In short, what is the nefarious practice for which a patron may not be found in the Hindoo pantheon? The morals of these people are therefore poisoned at the fountains and altars of religion.

Fourthly. The Worship and Ceremonies practised by the Hindoos, with various circumstances appertaining to them, have the effect of *vitiating*, as well as of *stupifying*, their minds. In an enlightened land it may appear superfluous, formally to state, that such are the consequences of idolatry; but that which is admitted, it may be well also, to recollect and to view, as exemplified in practice. The divine nature is infinitely degraded by every material representation; and the man already so gross as to resort to one, becomes more gross in using it. If he does not at length drop the idea of a distinct invisible power, and think only of the object before him, (as there is reason to suspect he will,) he at least believes that his god inhabits the stock or the stone, which he has set up. European apologists for so monstrous a practice, have been willing to deny this idea of idolatry; but an evidence of far superior authority, the author of the Bhagvad, asserts its reality. He introduces Crishna, who is *there represented as Vishnow, with supreme authority*, saying, "the "ignorant * believe me, who am invisible, to exist in the visible form under which "they see me †." And the learned translator of the Bhagvad is of opinion, that it was one of the aims of that work, "to induce men at least to believe God, that is "the Supreme God, present in every image before which they bent." Between depraved opinions entertained of the Divine Being, and depraved practice, there is a necessary and inseparable connection. Those opinions originate from corruption, and he who makes a god for himself, will certainly contrive to receive from him an indulgence for his corrupt propensities. Hence all the scandalous and shocking proceedings, of which some intimation has been given in the preceding pages. If we suppose the origin of the erroneous notions in question to have been the allegorization of physical truths, or of the powers of nature, still if the inventors had not ceased to be shocked by lust, fraud, and robbery, would they have stamped those qualities on their gods, and chosen extravagant representations of them as badges of religion? In all the popular worship of the Hindoos, God is never set forth under the view of *Holiness*, "as of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;" nor is any service offered to him worthy of a rational mind. *The Supreme God has indeed neither temple nor honour among the people*; the few Brahmins who recognize his being, do not suppose him to concern himself with the affairs of the world; and the better conceptions which they have of his nature, (though the rays of original truth scattered through their system, are overwhelmed in the mass of polytheism and idolatry,) they hold as speculations, which they conceal from the multitude, and in practice oppose. So that the indulgence in immorality, which we have seen to be carried to such a length, is not the perversion and degeneracy of their system, but its very essence.

Unrestrained however as the Hindoos are, with respect to immoral licence, they gain little satisfaction from their religion, with regard to those things which affect them most, namely, natural evils, and the interests of the present life. They do not consider one Mind, one Power, as governing the universe; they are distracted by a multiplicity of deities, who are not represented as acting in uniform concert, but often as at variance. It must generally therefore be an uncertainty among them, whether the tutelar deity whom they have chosen, is able to protect them; whether the prayers of their enemies may not prevail; whether other deities, whom they do not assiduously serve, may not injure them; though they multiply inventions to persuade themselves, and others, of the pre-eminence of their respective peculiar deities; and the followers of Vishnow and Eswara are, on this account, in mortal opposition to each other.

They invoke indeed particular deities for particular things, (with ceremonies of the most abominable kinds, in which the women are pre-eminent,) and those of the subordinate classes are perhaps not to be enumerated. But after all, they think it best, especially the lower castes, to endeavour to conciliate evil spirits likewise, to deprecate their malice, and implore their friendship. To one of them‡ they sacrifice, on

* The "ignorant," from the whole scope of the work whence this is taken, appear to be all except a few of the most enlightened Brahmins.

† Bhagvad-Geeta, page 71.

‡ Called by Roger, page 245, Ganga-gramma.

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on the festival dedicated to his honour, goats and buffaloes, instead of a man, the sacrifice which it is said was formerly offered; at which time also, some of his deluded votaries were wont to throw themselves before his processional car, that by being crushed under it, they might receive a happy death. The practice still common, of swinging by hooks fixed in the muscles of the back, and attached to ropes, which with a lever raise the body to a considerable height, is performed in honour of this malevolent spirit. This is the same deity described by Sonerat* as a goddess, under the name of Mariatale, who, he says, was a most infamous woman, guilty of all sorts of cruelties; but her body after the head had been deservedly severed from it, being re-animated by an evil spirit, she is now, under this decapitated form, greatly feared and served by the lower Indians on the Coast of Coromandel, and by the Pariaus in particular, who put her, he adds, above God.

Another mode of honouring their deities, is common in those provinces where the Mahomedan invaders never fully settled themselves. Troops of prostitutes are attached to the pagodas, they are brought up as the servants of the idol, dance in its processions, and make part of the establishment of the place. The accession of such auxiliaries to a religious institution, and the belief of their being even in an enviable state as to another world, are justified by the legendary merit of one of their order, who is related to have been visited by Dewender, keeper of the celestial regions, in the form of a man, and to have shown great fidelity to him. Let this notorious fact declare, whether the impurity of their deities and temples, has any connection with immorality in practice.

The Hindoo mythology has not only the tendency of directly vitiating the heart, but gives such false notions of nature, as must envelop the mind in gross ignorance and error, and thus strengthen the dominion of superstition, and its attendant vices. Their legendary allegorical histories of the creation of good and evil spirits, and saints, with their wars and actions; of the elements, the seasons, and the planets, all of which are personified by them, have come at length literally to be received by the vulgar; who thus seriously believe that the sun and moon are animated beings, or Dewtahs, and that when they are eclipsed, two evil spirits, or dragons, have seized them. On such occasions therefore vast multitudes have been used to resort to the rivers for the purpose of ablution and prayer, to beat the water, and make hideous noises, in order to induce the dragons to relinquish their hold. Bernier witnessed a scene of this sort at Delhi, in the last century, of which he has given a striking description†. The people in our settlements do not seem now to be so loud on these occasions. The learned among the Brahmins know better: but if they have for more than two thousand years, persisted in keeping the vulgar under such absurd deception, they are very unworthy depositories of science. In the knowledge of the globe they seem to be themselves grossly defective, maintaining a scheme of geography, imaginary and ridiculous, the offspring of the same genius as the mythological legends. The extravagant errors of the Hindoos respecting visible nature, tend to render their minds less apt for the perception of moral truth.

Besides the consequences of idolatry, which are universal, the very appearance of the Hindoo idols in general, has a tendency to degrade the worshippers: they are hideously ugly, with many heads, arms, and weapons; with great teeth and eyes, and terrific countenances, of a black colour; many of them smeared with oil, and smelling strongly of it. They are shut up in narrow dark rooms, and the approach to them is through obscurity and silence. The scandalous obscenity of others has been before hinted. Figures of the monkey, the bull, and of various other animals, are often placed around, and worshipped as the attendants of the superior deity of the place.

Of the innumerable, strange, and antic ceremonies, gestures, and postures, practised by the Hindoos in their worship, no full description can be given. They are varied according to the rules of different sects, and the fancies of individuals. The account contained in the Ayeen Akberry‡, of the *Poojah*, a form in daily and ordinary use, will give some idea of them, and hardly fail to excite commiseration for the deplorable blindness of the people.

" *Poojah* is divided into sixteen ceremonies. After the worshipper has performed " his usual ablutions, with the *Sindehya* and *Howm*, he sits down, looking towards " the east or the north, with his legs drawn up in front; then taking in his hand a " little

* Vol. I. page 246. † Tome II. page 97. ‡ Vol. III. page, 226.

" little water and rice, sprinkles the idol, thinking that he thereby begins the worship " of God. Next is the *Kulsh Poojah*, or the worship of the conch-shell. Last is " the *Gunta-Poojah*, which is plaistering the bell with sandal wood. When he has " performed these Poojahs, he throws down a little rice, and wishes that God may " be manifested; thus far includes the first of the sixteen ceremonies. 2. He places " a table of metal, or any thing else, as a seat for the deity. 3. He throws water " into a vessel, to wash his footsteps. In Hindostan it is the custom, that when a " superior enters the house of an inferior, he washes his feet. 4. He sprinkles " water thrice, to represent the idol rinsing his mouth. It is also the custom for " an inferior to bring to a superior water to rinse his mouth before meals. 5. Sandal " flowers, beetle, and rice, are offered to the idol. 6. The idol and his seat are " carried to another spot. When he takes in his right hand a white conch-shell full " of water, which he throws over the idol, and with his left rings the bell. 7. He " dries the idol with a cloth, replaces it upon its seat, and dresses it. 8. He puts " the zenar (a sacred thread) upon the idol. 9. He makes the kushck (lines with a " composition of cow-dung, &c.) upon the idol, in twelve places. 10. He throws " over the idol, flowers or green leaves. 11. He fumigates it with perfume. " 12. He lights a lamp with ghee (clarified butter). 13. He places before the idol, " trays of food, according to his ability, which are distributed amongst the by- " standers, as the idol's leavings. The 14th is called *numskar*, which is worshipping " God with heart and tongue; and stretching himself at full length, with his face " towards the ground, (this prostration is called dundowt); then he lays himself in " such manner that his eight members touch the ground, namely, the two knees, " two hands, forehead, nose, and cheeks; and this they call *shastang*. *These kinds " of prostrations are also performed to great men.* 15. He compasses the idol " several times. 16. He stands like a slave with his hands uplifted, and asks per- " mission to depart. There are particular prayers, and many different ways of per- " forming these sixteen ceremonies; and others believe that only from the ninth to " the thirteenth are indispensable duties. Excepting a *Sonny-assy* and a *Sooder*, all " other Hindoos perform this Poojah thrice every day."

FIFTHLY, The spirit of superstition extends among the Hindoos to every hour, and every business of life. The particulars recently stated, though striking, give no adequate idea of the universality of its operation; and to follow it through all its influences, would be an endless task. Some further illustrations may however suffice to confirm the existence of such a spirit, and to prove its powerful and incessant influence over the minds of this people. Affecting, in a variety of ways, their understanding and their conduct, it must also enter, in no inconsiderable degree, into the constitution of their moral and national character.

The Hindoos, it has been already observed, are afraid of evil spirits, such as are denominated among us, dæmons and genii. They believe the world to abound with them; every little district has its haunted places; and persons who pass them often, make some offering, or render homage to appease and conciliate the residing genius. Many are the devices in use amongst them to fortify themselves against the assaults of these malignant beings, which they apprehend on small occasions as well as on great; for when a Hindoo yawns, he performs a short exorcism, to prevent the dæmon from seizing that opportunity of entering into his body. Possessions are most firmly believed by them, and the appearance of them is not at all uncommon. The persons are evidently convulsed and agitated in an extraordinary manner; they declare that a spirit has seized them; and there is seldom reason to think them insincere in making such assertions, because the circumstance happens to servants, and others, who from caste, and the usages of the country, hardly ever meddle with the curious arts. The notion of apparitions, is also very familiar among the people. Their legends countenance it, and their imaginations, weak and inordinate, multiply relations of this kind. It is supposed also, that the spirits of the dead have access to the living, in various ways, and may do them good or evil. Witchcraft is universally believed, and practised among them. Every village has one or more female professors of this art, and wizards also abound: these are dreaded, accused, and resorted to, as was the case in Europe in the dark ages. But in Hindostan, this is still an active and flourishing profession. The several arts of divination, soothsaying, sorcery, necromancy, and above all, astrology, are well known and highly regarded. From the work of Abul Fazil, it would appear, that they are all explained and sanctioned in the Shasters. The Vedes, we know, enjoin the horoscope to be drawn at the birth of a child, and this is con-

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stantly practised. The Magistrate, among the Hindoos, was bound always to have skilful astrologers and soothsayers about him. The code imposes punishment upon *any one ignorant of astrology*, who shall presume to predict misfortune to the Magistrate. No affair of importance is at this day undertaken without consulting a soothsayer.

Incantations also, which form another very large branch in the occult arts of the Hindoos, are amply treated of in the Vedes, and in practice are universal. Their object is unlimited; to procure all good, and avert all evil.

With incantations, may be classed the endless variety of charms, spells, talismans, amulets, and other inventions of this nature, of which no individual, small or great, of all the millions of the Hindoo race, is destitute. The confidence reposed in these things is wonderful. It is a part of the duty enjoined in the Hindoo code to the sovereign, "that he keep magicians, men who can cure by spells," upon which far more reliance is placed than on medicine. While the writer of this sketch was in Hindostan, he saw in one morning, two fine young men, the pupils of a snake-charmer, lying dead, in consequence of their undoubting confidence, that the spell which he had taught them would render the poison of the serpent innoxious. Presuming upon this spell, first one and then the other provoked a most venomous snake to bite him, and in two hours they were both corpses, leaving destitute families. Unsuccessful instances of this sort do not open the eyes of the people. They are referred to irregularity in the application of the spell, and do not impeach the efficacy of the art.

As a further illustration of this vast system of imposition, the following transcripts are made from the Ayeen Akberry *, the work it is to be remembered, of a man of the first eminence for talents, rank, and information, who was born and passed his life in Hindostan.

SUR,

"Is the art of predicting events, by observing in what manner the breath issues "through the nostrils. The breath comes out of the nostrils after three ways. First, "when it comes mostly out of the left nostril. This they attribute to the influence "of the moon, and call *adda* and *chandernaree*. The second, when it issues most "from the right nostril, which they attribute to the influence of the sun, and therefore "call *soorejnaree* and *pingela*. The third is, when both nostrils breathe equally. The "following is the order in which the breath ought to pass through the nose:—from "perva to the third tith, chandernaree, and the same number of days soorejnaree, "alternately throughout the month: others, make it weekly, thus, Sunday, Tuesday, "Thursday, and Saturday, soorejnaree; and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, "chandernaree. Others maintain that it is regulated by the sun's course through the "zodiac, Aries beginning with the soorejnaree, Taurus with chandernaree, and thus "alternately through all the signs. All the learned of the Hindoos believe, that if "a man breathes differently from one of these three ways, some misfortune will befal "him; if the irregularity lasts two days, a quarrel will ensue; if it continues ten "days, some misfortune will befal him; if fifteen days, he will have a severe fit of "sickness; if for a month, his brother will die. Others speak thus of the irregularity "of breathing; if for a day and night, soorejnaree is in excess, the person will die "at the expiration of a year; if it lasts two days and nights, he will live two years; "and so a year for every day; if the excess continues for a month, he will die at the "end of the ensuing month. For the excess of chandernaree, they say, if it lasts "a day and night, that person will have a fit of sickness at the expiration of a year; "and according to the number of days he will be so many years sick."

The manner of predicting events by the knowledge of this art †.

"If any one comes to enquire whether a woman who is pregnant shall be deli-"vered of a boy or girl, the person who is to answer, must examine the nostrils of "the questioner; if he breathes more through one nostril than the other, and stands "on that side, it shall foretel a son; but if he happen to place himself on the "opposite side, it shall indicate that it will be a daughter; if he breathes equally "through both nostrils, there will be twins. Some believe that if the questioner "stands on the soorejnaree side, it will be a boy; and if on the chandernaree, a "daughter; and that if the breathing be equal, it denotes an hermaphrodite."

If

* Vol: III. page 175.

† Ayeen Akberry, Vol. III. page 176.

" If an inquiry is made concerning a person who is sick; if the questioner stands " on the soorejnaree side, the sick person will die; but if on the chandernaree side, " he will recover."

" If it be inquired whether or not an enemy's army will come; if the questioner " is chandernaree, and stands on that side, the army will come; but if he is soorej- " naree, and stands on that side, it will not come."

" If he enquires concerning peace and war; chandernaree implies the first, and " soorejnaree the last."

AKUM *,

" Teaches what incantations are advantageous, and what are hurtful; what " will improve the understanding, *increase rank and fortune*, cure diseases, *subdue* " *enemies*, cement friendships, insure the conquest of countries, and advance the " success of government."

SHOOGUN †,

" Is the art of discovering what is now happening, and predicting future events " by *observing the motions* of birds. This is an art in which many Hindoos " are skilled."

" The learned Hindoos discover hidden things by means of five things; 1, *Astro-* " *logy*,—2, *Sur*,—3, *Shoogun*,—4, *Keyweel*, which are omens learnt by throwing dice, " —5, *Samdirg*, predicting from observing the form of the limbs, and their motion, " and the lines and moles on the body."

GARUD ‡,

" Is the art of repeating certain *incantations* for recovering a person who has been " stung by a scorpion, or snake, or any other venemous reptile. This is done by " repeating his genealogy and praising his ancestors, which obliges the animal to " present itself. The following is a wonderful fact. When they have caught an old " snake of a particular species, they repeat certain incantations, and then make it " bite a Brahmin; when the poison takes effect, the Brahmin continues for some " time in a state of stupefaction, when, upon any question being put to him, he " gives answers which are invariably found to be true. The Hindoo philosophers " believe that during the revolution of the Cal-jowg, nothing is truer than such " answers. And these answers have been collected together into several volumes."

INDERJAL §,

" Includes the art of necromancy, talismans, and slight of hand, in which they " are wonderful beyond description."

But the excessive solicitude of the Hindoos about the future, is in nothing more conspicuous than in their regard to omens, signs, lucky, and unlucky days. They carry this attention to a length almost incredible. It interferes perpetually in all the affairs in which they are concerned, as Europeans who have to act with them have the mortification to find. Roger, a Dutch clergyman of great credit, frequently cited in this treatise, has given in his work, written in the earlier part of the last century, on the Coast of Coromandel, and since translated into French, an account of their proceedings in this respect, which so well suits the present manners of Bengal, that while it fully illustrates the subject under consideration, it evinces the sameness of character, prevalent among them in distant periods and places.

" D'autant‖ qu'il a esté dit dans l'onzieme chapitre, que les Brahmins, et autres " nations payennes, prennent garde aux jours, quand ils ont dessein d'aller faire " la demande d'un marriage, ou pour le confirmer, il ne sera pas pour ce sujet, " hors de propos, de parler un peu comme on prend garde au signes et aux choix " des jours."

" Ils n'entreprendront point une affaire qu'en un jour, qui, selon leur compte, " est bon; et s'il se presente quelque signe ce bon jour-là, qui selon leur opinion, " est mauvais, ils ne la poursuivront pas, craignant que la fin n'en soit pas bonne.

" Quand

* Ayeen Akberry, Vol. III. page 177.
† Ibid. - - - III. - 178.
‡ Ibid. - - - III. - 178.
§ Ayeen Akberry, Vol. III. page 179.
‖ Roger, Porte Ouverte, page 71.

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" Quand ils ont le dessein d'entreprendre un voyage par terre, ils avanceront souvent leur voyage, pour prendre l'occasion d'un jour et d'une bonne heure, quoique ce seroit vers le soir, et qu'ils ne pourroient pas aller plus d'un quart d'heure loin de la ville, cela n'estant pas capable de les en empescher, estant asseurez que quand ils partent en une bonne heure tout leur voyage sera heureux. Ils différont souvent leur voyage quelques jours, pour avoir un bon jour et une bonne heure; et il arrive souvent, (comme j'ay dit,) qu'ils ont perdu, en attendant les bons jours, la bonne occasion, et le temps propre, pour avancer leur voyage, et pour avoir un heureux succez de leurs affaires. De façon qu'on peut dire, avec juste raison, de ces payens-là, ce que *Seneque* disoit des sabats des Juifs; " que plusieurs choses, qu'on devoit faire à l'instant, estoient souvent perdues, ou ne se faisoient jamais, à cause qu'on différoit, et qu'on ne les faisoit pas en temps." Il s'en va de cette façon avec ces payens-cy; car pendant qu'ils attendent assez les bons jours, et les bonnes heures, ils les perdent souvent, et souffrent beaucoup de dommage; et ce que je n'ay pas vu seulement une fois, pendant que j'ay fait là ma résidence, mais d'an en an, que par le retardement, ils ont laissé passer le temps de *mouson*, et ont esté contraints de revenir, sans rien faire, apres estre parvenus à la moitié du chemin de *Pégu*, Jannasseri, et Achim*. C'est une chose estonnante, qu'ils ne deviennent pas plus prudents pour l'avenir, par le dommage, et la perte qu'ils souffrent continuellement; qu'ils persistent et continuent tousjours dans leur ancienne erronée, et inutile practique. Comme cette opinion est profondément enracinée en eux, ils n'en peuvent pas estre divertis."

" Mais† pour entendre ledit *panjangam* (almanach) il faut sçavoir, comme nous avons dit au chapitre précédent, que les payens avoient trente heures au jour, et trente heures à la nuict. Il est déclaré dans ce *panjangam*, touchant chaque jour de la semaine, et touchant chaque heure qui se rencontre dans le jour, ce qu'on peut faire en icelles avec bons succez, et ce qu'on doit laisser."

" 1. Que le dimanche commençant au lever du soleil, la premiers heure est bonne pour toutes sortes d'affaires de discours, ou de conseil."

" 2. Si l'on entreprend quelque affaire, qui apporte ordinairement du profit, elle succédera bien, et apportera du profit."

" 3. Si l'on entreprend quelque affaire pour en recevoir du profit, elle ne succédera pas bien."

" 4. Si l'on espere recevoir quelque chose de bon, l'enemy jouira de ce bien-là."

" 5. Il y aura du profit à faire merchandise."

" 6. Il fait bon célébrer une feste, ou entreprendre quelque chose concernant joye ou doctrine."

" 7. Traité touchant femmes succédera selon le desir."

" 8. La marchandise ne donnera point de profit."

" 9. Comme en la sixieme heure."

" 10. Ce qu'on entreprend ne succédera pas bien."

" 11. Il est mauvais de prendre médicine, ou de faire quelque chose pour le contentement du corps."

" 12. Qui cherche victoire, il luy succédera bien."

" 13. Il fait bon d'acheter des vaches, des bestes, &c."

" 14. Il fait bon de prendre quelqu'un à son service."

" 15. Il est mauvais d'entre dans une maison neuve, ou de visiter quelqu'un dans sa maison."

" 16. Il est bon de commencer quelques maisons, village, ou ville."

" 17. Il n'est pas bon d'entreprendre un voyage."

" 18. Il est bon de visiter les grands."

" 19. Il est bon de faire des images à l'honneur des pagodes."

" 20. Il est mauvais d'entreprendre quelque chose."

" 21. Celuy qui pense gaigner quelque chose, sera trompé."

" 22. Celuy qui entreprend une bataille, la perdra."

" 23. Il

* The mariners concerned in these voyages were probably Mahomedans, the owners of the vessels may have been Hindoos, but both have this superstition.

† Roger, page 84.

" 23. Il est bon de rechercher l'amitié."
" 24. Il fait bon se battre."
" 25. Il fait bon prendre conseil de quelqu'un quelque part."
" 26. La marchandise n'apportera pas de gain."
" 27. Qui aura la connoissance d'une femme, aura un enfant."
" 28. Tout ce qu'on entreprendra, réussira."
" 29. Celuy qui entreprendra quelque chose de plantage, aura bon succez."
" 30. Tout ce qu'on souhaitera auparavant, ne succédera pas bien."
" Il ira de mesme la nuict, d'heure à heure, jusqu'au soleil levant."

The other days of the week, and the sixty parts into which each is divided, are detailed in the same strain; and thus every half hour is marked by something specific to be undertaken or to be avoided *. How much the affairs of life, and all rational considerations about them, must be interrupted; how much the poor people, who are enslaved to this superstition, must be harassed by it; may easily be conceived. They seek relief from every thing, and fear every thing except the Supreme Lord.

But this is not the only yoke imposed upon them. Their ceremonial defilements, pollutions, and uncleannesses, the ways in which caste may be stained or lost, the methods of purification, the regulations concerning food, the manner of dressing and eating it, the ceremonies at births, at different ages, at marriages and deaths, all these multiplied beyond enumeration, with a prodigious calendar of burthensome festivals and fasts, constitute a most grievous bondage.

A scrupulous Hindoo cannot go forth from his house without being accessible, on all sides, to dangers from omens and defilements. He must proceed every step with fear and circumspection, lest some calamity should come upon him. " Dust † shaken " from flesh, from a broom, a garment, or from divers animals; the touch of a burnt " net, a crow, a cock, a hen, a rat or mouse, an eunuch, a washerman, a hunter, a " fisherman, a gamester, a distiller, an executioner, a tanner, a dealer in leather, an " oilman, and of any sinner;" these are some of the manifold ways in which by contact, by accidents, or by the arts of others, personal pollutions may be contracted. The ceremonies which respect the article of food alone, might form a volume. Many kinds of provisions are totally forbidden; others become, in particular circumstances, unlawful; and those which are allowed, may be defiled by a thousand contingencies. The vessels used in preparing food, if touched by one of the lower caste, are defiled. The shadow of a chandal, (a person of the base caste before mentioned,) passing even over water, defiles it. All things usable, liquids, grain, metals, silks, cottons, vegetables, domestic utensils, the earth itself, are liable to pollution, and the remedies to be applied for their purification are prescribed ‡. " Sunshine, moon-" shine, the light of a fire, air, water, earth, ashes, mustard-seed, wild grain, the " shade of a tree, *the hind part of a cow's leg*, a plough, milk, milk curds, ghee or " clarified butter, the dung and urine of a cow," are a very few of the things which are esteemed to have a purifying virtue, and mostly in cases of personal defilement.

Besides the time employed in their daily ablutions and ceremonies, that which is lost from attending to the lucky and unlucky hours, and that which must be given to the removal of contracted defilements, there are many rigorous fasts § prescribed, and a still greater number of festivals ‖. Of these last only, the whole number appointed for the *different castes* appears, from the Ayeen Akberry, to be about a hundred in the year, and they are in general carefully observed.

It is not however enough, that the Hindoos bear the accumulated evils, natural and fictitious, of their present state of existence. The Brahmins profess a science called *Kurrembeypak*, " by which," says Abul Fazil, " can be discovered whatever was " done by men in their former state of existence;" *and it prescribes a particular expiation for each crime* ¶. It is probable that there has always been more discretion than

* A few articles in the detail are curious enough to be noted,
" Celuy qui entreprendra quelque chose *au* " *desavantage de son prochain*, cela lui réussira.
" Il fait bon, entreprendre *une mauvaise affaire*.
" Il est bon, d'entreprendre quelque chose, pour " donner de la crainte a quelqu'un; celuy qui mange " du poison, il en recevra les mesme avantages que " de *l'Amortam*," (supposed to be the same as " *Amrita*, the nectar of the gods.)
" Il faithon brusler les malades, ou les couper.
" Celuy qui cherche chose pour tromper, il ne " le recontrera pas.
" Qui veut entreprendre quelque chose, ses " enemies mouront.

† Ayeen Akberry, page 242.
‡ Ibid. - - - - 243.
§ Ibid. - - - - 247.
‖ Ibid. - - - - 268.
¶ Ibid. - - - - 167.

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than rigour, in the exercise of the authority derived from this source; but the invention itself is so singular, as to merit some further observation.

The art is subdivided into *four kinds*; and distinct examples of each are given in the Ayeen Akberry, (Vol. III. page 167)*.

From these examples, the following only shall be selected, as being short, and affording a sufficient explanation of the nature, and possible extension of this new species of taxation.

DISEASES which are Punishments for CRIMES in a FORMER STATE.

" Lameness is a punishment for having kicked a Brahmin.—*Cure*, Let him take " one tolah of gold, in the form of a horse, and bestow it in charity; and give food " to one hundred and eighty Brahmins."

" A fever is a punishment for killing an innocent Kheteree.—*Cure*, Repeating one " hundred times the incantation of Mahadeo, feeding thirteen Brahmins, and sprink- " ling with water the image of Mahadeo one hundred times."

" A cough is a punishment for killing a Brahmin.—*Cure*, Making a lotus of four " tolahs of gold, and after repeating certain incantations, performing with it the " ceremony of the *Howm*, and giving it to a righteous Brahmin."

" A woman whose husband dies before her, in her former state was of a great " family, which she left to live with a stranger, and when he died burned herself with " him.—*Cure*, She must pass all her life in austerities, or put an end to her existence " by burying herself in snow."

" A woman who has only daughters, is punished for having possessed a great deal " of pride in her former existence, and not showing proper respect to her husband.— " *Cure*, Besides ornamenting a white ox with gold, &c. she is to satisfy with food " one hundred Brahmins: or she must make ten mashes of gold, in the form of " a deity, and after performing certain incantations, give it in charity, and feed fifty " Brahmins."

The review of the Hindoo religion shall be closed here. Whatever antiquity may be justly ascribed to that religion, whatever acknowledgements its mysterious writings may contain of one Supreme Being†, and of some of his perfections, whatever mixture

* The Institutes of Menu established the doctrine of sufferings for sins committed in a former state, and describe both the signs by which those sins may be discovered, and the expiations which must be made for them. Some passages from that work will further illustrate the doctrine.

" If a twice-born man, by the will of God in " this world, or from his natural birth, have any " corporeal mark of an expiable sin *committed in* " *this or a former state*, he must hold no intercourse " with the virtuous while his penance remains un- " performed."

" Some evil minded persons, for sins committed " in this life, and *some for bad actions in a preceding* " *state*, suffer a morbid change in their bodies."

" A stealer of gold from a Brahmin, has whit- " lows on his nails; a drinker of spirits, black " teeth; the slayer of a Brahmin, a marasmus; " the violator of his guru's bed, a deformity in " the generative organs; a malignant informer, " fetid ulcers in his nostrils; a false detractor, " stinking breath; a stealer of grain, the defect " of some limb; a mixer of bad wares with good, " some redundant member;

" A stealer of dressed grain, dyspepsia; a stealer " of holy words, *or an unauthorised reader of the* " *scriptures*, dumbness; a stealer of clothes, le- " prosy; a horse-stealer, lameness."

" Penance therefore, must invariably be per- " formed for the sake of expiation; since they who " have not expiated their sins, will again spring to " birth with disgraceful marks."

Institutes of Menu, page 313.

† It is doubtless very pleasing to discover the recognition of this grand principle, the foundation of all true religion, even under an immense mass of falsehood and superstition; but some persons seem to have thought, that in ascertaining the existence of this principle in the writings of the Hindoos, or in the opinions of their learned men, they had substantially vindicated and established the religious character of that people; making little account of their idolatry, which is practised by the Brahmins, they represent to be no more than a symbolical worship of the divine attributes; and which as admitting among the vulgar, the idea of subaltern intelligences, they represent to arise from the veneration paid to the elements, which are thought to contain a portion of God, who according to an alledged tenet of the Hindoo faith, is held to be the soul of the world*. Not to dwell upon the falsity of this view of Hindoo idolatry, which has been already contradicted by quotations from the Bhagvad-Geeta, it may be sufficient to observe to any who lean to so latitudinarian an opinion, an opinion which falls below even the creed of deism, that the speculative admission of one or more important truths will not, in the least, prove the religious system, or the religious practice, of any person or community to be right. The picture of the ancient Heathens, given to us by unerring authority, is a striking, and affecting repretentation of the people of whom we now speak. " They " held the truth in unrighteousness. . . . . From " the visible works of the Creator, they understood

* Dow's History of Hindostan, Vol. I. Dissertation on the Religion, &c. of the Hindoos.

mixture of moral principles may be found interspersed in its ordinances (for without some cement of this kind it would be impossible to constitute a religion for creatures, endowed with any share of reason and conscience) it plainly appears, that its general system is in theory most depraved; and that it is a system which, when reduced to practice, renders abortive the few moral principles originally admitted into it; and not only tolerates, but necessarily countenances, and encourages, the most extravagant and abandoned wickedness. The manners of some of the Brahmins who pass their time in going through the ceremonies of their religion, or an indolent application to their books, exempt from the concerns of the world, and therefore unblackened with the crimes so common among those of more active pursuits, form no exception to this remark; nor the rigorous austerities practised by the devotees of another class, who give themselves entirely up to a life of wandering mortification. Both these descriptions of men deny themselves in some things, but it is in order to be more abundantly gratified in others. The pride of their superior rank and qualifications, and above all, of their supposed sanctity, and the idolatrous reverence which they receive from the common people, render them insufferably arrogant; and there is the grossest deviation from rational and meritorious principles in the conduct of both:—in that of the Brahmin, who imposes upon the people a worship and ceremonies, which he knows to be groundless and pernicious; in that of the Jogee, who abandons his wife, children, and connections, to become useless and burthensome to others, and to himself, for the rest of his days.

The absolute dominion which this religion gives to the Brahmins, and a few of the second tribe, over the rest of the people, must also have forced itself upon the attention. No similar invention among men, seems to have been so long and so completely successful. This success may be accounted for, partly, from a favourable concurrence of various circumstances; but chiefly, from the character of the religion itself. Erected upon the darkest ignorance, and the boldest falshood, it has been the work of ages to strengthen these foundations, and to render the fabric impregnable. The understanding is chained and kept in perpetual imprisonment, like dreaded rivals for power in the East, who deprived of their eyes, and immured in dungeons, receive poisoned provisions from the gaoler's hands. Every avenue which might lead to emancipation, is strongly guarded. Fear is immeasurably excited, and incessantly wrought

"stood his eternal power and godhead . . . . . .
"But when they knew God they glorified him not
"as God, neither were thankful; but became vain
"in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was
"darkened. . . . . Professing themselves to be
"wise, they became fools . . . . . And changed
"the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image
"made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and
"four-footed beasts, and creeping things . . . . .
"Wherefore also God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lust of their own hearts, to
"dishonour their own bodies between themselves;
". . . . . Who changed the truth of God into a
"lie, and worshipped and served the creature more
"than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, amen.
". . . . . For this cause, God gave them up to vile
"affections . . . . . And even as they did not like
"to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them
"over to a reprobate mind, to do those things
"which are not convenient; . . . . . Being filled
"with all unrighteousness." *Romans* i. 18. 24. 26. 28. 29.

With respect to the real tenets of the Hindoos on subjects of theology, they are to be taken from their ancient books, rather than from the oral declarations of the most learned Brahmins of modern times, who have discovered that the opinions of Christians, concerning the nature of God, are far more rational than those currently entertained among them, and that the gross idolatry of the Hindoos is contemned by the more intelligent natives of the western world. Bernier* seems to have found occasion for the same remark in his time, for after relating a conference between him and some learned pandits, in which the latter endeavoured to refine away the grossness of their image-worship: "Voila (says he) sans ajôuter, ni "diminuer, la solution qu'ils me donnerent, mais a "vous dire le vrai, cela me sembloit un peu trôp "bien concerté, *a la chretienne*, aux prix de ce "que j'en avoit appris de plusieurs autre pandits." —It may be allowable to add here, that it is of importance in communicating, through the medium of European tongues, the writings of Eastern nations, not only to render their sense with rigid strictness and accuracy, but as much as possible, with the dress, the air, the manners of the original; for it is conceivable, that elegance of language, harmony of periods, grace of composition, and the illuminations of European learning, may in a version, unintentionally impart to doctrines, sentiments, or narrations, an elevation, a symmetry, or a polish, which, in their original garb, they do not possess. In this view, an author, to whom the world are under considerable obligations, may be quoted with applause.

"In executing this work," (says Mr. Wilkins, "of the translation of the Heetopades) I have "scrupulously adhered to the text; and I have "preferred drawing a picture, of which it may be "said, *I can suppose it a strong likeness, although* "*I am unacquainted with the original*, to a flattering portrait where characteristic features, because not altogether consonant to European "taste, must have been sacrificed to the harmony "of composition. I have ever attended to the "form of my model, and have preserved what "was originally in verse, distinct, by indenting "every line but the first of each distich."—Mr. *Wilkins'* Preface to the Heetopades, page 14.

* Tome II. page 159.

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wrought upon; not a rational fear of falling into moral evil, and offending the righteous and holy Sovereign of the universe, but a fear of numberless fictitious dangers from every part of nature, from things real and imaginary, in every situation, and in every transaction. Fear is the grand instrument by which these poor people are held down, never daring to examine into the reality of what they are told is impending over them. False hope is likewise held out to them; and they are taught to seek deliverance, safety, and happiness, in a multitude of unmeaning, fantastic ceremonies, which constitute a grievous drudgery, engrossing their time, and confining their thoughts. In all these rites, and in whatever regards the civil and personal, as well as the religious concerns of the Hindoos, the Brahmins have made themselves indispensably necessary. They formed the religion, they are the sole exclusive depositaries of its ordinances, they are the expounders of them, they are, under a Hindoo sovereign, authorized to assist in the government of public affairs, and in effect to control it; they are the framers and admistrators of the law, they have exorbitant personal privileges in all the ordinary affairs and transactions of life, they are the sole ministers, either officiating or directing, in all the vast train of ceremonies, observances, ablutions, defilements, purifications, penances, and works of supererogation, of which their religion consists; the endless questions arising about caste, are determined by them. In short, a Hindoo, from the hour of his birth, through the different stages of his existence, in infancy, in youth, in manhood, in old age, and in death, in all the relations, and in all the casualties of life, is subject to an accumulation of burthensome rites, with which the preservation of his caste, his credit, and place in society, are strictly connected: nay, for his conduct in former states of being, preceding his birth, these absolute lords of his faith, conscience, and conduct, bring him to account, nor do they resign their dominion over him when he is dead. The return he has for unbounded subjection, is an indulgence in perpetual deviations, even from those few principles of morality which his religion acknowledges. It is thus that abject slavery, and unparalleled depravity, have become distinguishing characteristics of the Hindoos.

Before we dismiss this branch of our subject, it may be proper to meet an enquiry which may have been rising in the mind of the reader while this account has proceeded. It may be said, If the representation here given be just, if such be the consequences of the complex system of Hindoo government, religion, and laws, how has Hindostan flourished under that system, as it is said to have done in ancient times? How has even the frame of society among the Hindoos been preserved from dissolution?

That country, certainly possessed of various advantages, derived them however from nature, not from its government. It enjoyed a most genial climate, a most fertile soil, a situation the most happy for security and for commerce. But its political institutions cramped its natural powers; in process of time they produced general corruption; the interest of the country, or of the state, came to be no concern with people, who, excluded even from thinking of public affairs, and unalterably fixed to one rank and occupation, had little to hope, or to fear, from a change: whence it was, as the ancients inform us, that the husbandman might be seen calmly tilling his field, while two armies were contending in his sight for dominion. Those institutions failed in effectual provision against foreign invasion, in the same degree that they produced internal degradation; and the people having at length filled up a high measure of immorality, the natural consequence of their principles, their northern neighbours, after many desolating inroads, and massacres, brought them under a foreign yoke.

But though the Hindoos lost the dominion of their own country, the influence of their religion, and their priests, remained. The ignorance and fear of the people, their terrible apprehension, especially of the loss or contamination of caste; the necessity thence resulting of adhering to the profession, and remaining in the country in which they were born; these causes, with the great extent of continent over which Hinduism had anciently spread, and the prodigious number of the people professing it, upheld its institutions (institutions which eventually sacrificed every thing else to perpetuate themselves) long after the transfer of sovereignty to foreigners of another faith. Thus the people were held together in the forms of the social state, by a chain, which the rude bigotry and ignorance of their conquerors only served to fasten more strongly; and this, in a word, with the coercive power exercised by the conquerors, explains

explains why they still continue united, beyond the period, when their corruptions might have dissolved the frame of society *.

CHAP. IV.

Inquiry into the Measures which might be adopted by Great Britain, *for the Improvement of the Condition of her* Asiatic *Subjects; and Answers to Objections.*

CHAP. IV. *Inquiry into Measures for improving the Condition of our Asiatic Subjects; and Answers to Objections.*

WE now proceed to the main object of this work, for the sake of which all the preceding topics and discussions have been brought forward,—an inquiry into the means of remedying disorders, which have become thus inveterate in the state of society among our Asiatic subjects, which destroy their happiness, and obstruct every species of improvement among them.

That it is in the highest degree desirable, that a healing principle should be introduced, no man surely will deny. Supposing it to be in our power to convince them of the criminality of the annual sacrifice of so many human victims on the funeral pile; of the profession of robbery, comprehending murder; of the indulgence of one class of people in the whole catalogue of flagitious crimes, without any adequate punishment; of the forfeiture of the lives of others, according to their institutes, for the merest trifles; of the arbitrary imposition of burthensome rites, devoid of all moral worth; of the pursuit of revenge, by offerings to vindictive deities; of

* The ancient splendor of India, its career in refinement, and the happiness resulting from its policy, have been viewed by the celebrated author of the *Historical Disquisition*, through a medium which hath magnified them to his apprehension greatly beyond their just dimensions, and guided his masterly hand in the delineation of a picture, far more beautiful than the original. In treating of the progress of society, one position seems of late to be generally assumed, that men at first set out from the savage state; a position which may sometimes at least be questionable, and which in respect to the original inhabitants of Hindostan, must be disputed. From this point however, Dr. Robertson conceives them to advance, through a long series of internal improvements, to the highest stages of refinement, unaided even by the accession of extraneous lights; whereas it appears more probable, that upon the first dispersion of mankind from the plains of Shinar, where the habits of civilized life must have prevailed, the most attractive climates would direct the lines of migration, and that early colonies proceeding to the eastward, through tracts of fertile country, would, without sinking into barbarism, soon spread into the luxuriant regions of India, where the rich abundance of the soil would speedily lead them to the arrangements of regular society. For countries extremely productive of the bounties of nature, seem to ripen the ideas of men, in some respects, with a quickness analogous to the rapidity of their vegetation; and where enjoyments are profusely offered, a certain degree of refinement will easily take place, and rights of property be understood, though the facility of acquisition will not be favourable to the spirit of improvement, and there may be vices in the political constitution which will absolutely limit its progress.

With respect to the Brahminical system of religion, law, and science, from which the strongest arguments for a long progressive course of refinement are deduced, reason has of late been given us to believe, that the elements of them did not spring up in Hindostan, but were derived from a source nearer to the original seat of the post-diluvian race. (See, in the Asiatic Researches, the papers of Sir William Jones, concerning the Hindoos.) But whatever the origin, or extent of knowledge among the Hindoos might be, it was, as we have seen, monopolized and concealed by the Brahmins. It spread little light among the great body of the people, and it is incorrect to refer to the whole nation, what only the priests possessed and guarded as a mystery. So with respect to the accumulations of wealth, which the nation enjoying abundant produce, and having few wants, might at length contain, it would centre with the Princes, Brahmins, and some of the chief persons of the other tribes. There might be numerous armies, splendid retinues and establishments, appertaining to the great, with a profusion of jewels and effeminate finery, in which these people delight; there would be many superb richly endowed pagodas, astonishing for their workmanship and cost, there would be great bodies of indolent well appointed priests, troops of buffoons, players, and dancers, the last belonging to the temples as well as the court; and all these appearances, with the general face of a country ever verdant and luxuriant, would strike the imagination of a stranger, especially if his business were with the metropolis, like that of Megasthenes, from whose superficial account of a country then little known, the opinions of the ancients seems to have been formed. But there is no reason to believe, that wealth was diffused freely through all the body politic; the *head* and *arms* might be enlarged, but the other parts would retain nearly their original size. There is no reason, in short, to believe, that the common people ever lived upon any thing but rice, or other inferior grain; ever wore any thing but a cincture, or at best a slight half covering of ordinary cotton cloth; or ever inhabited any better dwellings than low inconvenient huts, with matted or mud walls, and straw roofs. Such is the present style, and such in all probability it ever has been, not because the people preferred this, but because they had no choice.

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of the establishment of lying, false evidence, gaming, and other immoralities, by law; of the pardon of capital offences for money; of trying to purchase the expiation of wilful and habitual iniquity, by ceremonial observances; and of the worship of stocks, stones, impure and malevolent deities; no man living, surely, would affirm that we ought, that we are at liberty, to withhold from them this conviction.

Are we bound for ever to preserve all the enormities in the Hindoo system? Have we become the guardians of every monstrous principle and practice which it contains? Are we pledged to support, for all generations, by the authority of our government and the power of our arms, the miseries which ignorance and knavery have so long entailed upon a large portion of the human race? Is this the part which a free, a humane, and an enlightened nation, a nation itself professing principles diametrically opposite to those in question, has engaged to act towards its own subjects? It would be too absurd and extravagant to maintain, that any engagement of this kind exists; that Great Britain is under any obligation, direct or implied, to uphold errors and usages, gross and fundamental, subversive of the first principles of reason, morality, and religion.

If we had conquered such a kingdom as Mexico, where a number of human victims were regularly offered every year upon the altar of the Sun, should we have calmly acquiesced in this horrid mode of butchery? Yet for near thirty years we have, with perfect unconcern, seen rites, in reality more cruel and atrocious, practised in our Indian territories. If human life must be sacrificed to superstition, at least the more useless, worthless, or unconnected members of the society might be devoted. But in Hindostan, mothers of families are taken from the midst of their children, who have just lost their father also, and by a most diabolical complication of force and fraud, are driven into the flames.

Shall we be in all time to come, as we hitherto have been, passive spectators of this unnatural wickedness? It may indeed well appear surprising that in the long period during which we have held those territories, we have made no serious attempt to recal the Hindoos to the dictates of truth and morality. This is a mortifying proof how little it has been considered, that the ends of government, and the good of society, have an inseparable connection with right principles. We have been satisfied with the apparent submissiveness of these people, and have attended chiefly to the maintenance of our authority over the country, and the augmentation of our commerce and revenues; but have never, with a view to the promotion of their happiness, looked thoroughly into their internal state.

If then we ought to wish for the correction of those criminal habits and practices which prevail among them, it cannot reasonably be questioned, that we ought also to make allowable attempts for this end; and it remains therefore only to consider in what manner this design may be best pursued.

Shall we resort to the power we possess, to destroy their distinctions of castes, and to demolish their idols? Assuredly not. Force, instead of convincing them of their error, would fortify them in the persuasion of being right; and the use of it, even if it promised happier consequences, would still be altogether unjust.

To the use of reason and argument, however, in exposing their errors, there can be no objection. There is indeed the strongest obligation to make those errors manifest, since they generate and tend to perpetuate all the miseries which have been set forth, and which our duty, as rulers, instead of permitting us to view with silent indifference, calls upon us by every proper method to prevent.

The true cure of darkness, is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant; and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders; and this remedy is proposed, from a full conviction, that if judiciously and patiently applied, it would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honourable and advantageous for us.

There are two ways of making this communication: the one is, by the medium of the languages of those countries; the other is, by the medium of our own. In general, when foreign teachers have proposed to instruct the inhabitants of any country, they have used the vernacular tongue of that people, for a natural and necessary reason, that they could not hope to make any other mean of communi-

cation

cation intelligible to them. This is not our case in respect of our Eastern dependencies. They are our own, we have possessed them long, many Englishmen reside among the natives, our language is not unknown there, and it is practicable to diffuse it more widely. The choice therefore of either mode, lies open to us; and we are at liberty to consider which is entitled to a preference. Upon this subject, it is not intended to pass an exclusive decision here; the points absolutely to be contended for are, that we ought to impart our superior lights, and that this is practicable; that it is practicable by two ways, can never be an argument why neither should be attempted. Indeed no good reason appears why either should be systematically interdicted, since particular cases may recommend, even that which is in general least eligible.

The acquisition of a foreign language is, to men of cultivated minds, a matter of no great difficulty. English teachers could therefore be sooner qualified to offer instruction in the native languages, than the Indians would be prepared to receive it in ours. This method would hence come into operation more speedily than the other; and it would also be attended with the advantage of a more careful selection of the matter of instruction. But it would be far more confined and less effectual; it may be termed a species of deciphering. The decipherer is required to unfold, in intelligible words, what was before hidden. Upon every new occasion, he has a similar labour to perform, and the information obtained from him is limited to the single communication then made. All other writings in the same character, still remain, to those who are ignorant of it, unknown; but if they are taught the character itself, they can at once read every writing in which it is used. Thus superior, in point of ultimate advantage, does the employment of the English language appear; and upon this ground, we give a preference to that mode, proposing here, that the communication of our knowledge shall be made by the medium of our own language. This proposition will bring at once to trial, both the principle of such communication, and that mode of conveyance which can alone be questioned; for the admission of the principle must at least include in it the admission of the narrowest means suited to the end, which we conceive to be the native languages. The principle, however, and the mode, are still distinct questions, and any opinion which may be entertained of the latter, cannot affect the former; but it is hoped, that what shall be offered here concerning them, will be found sufficient to justify both.

We proceed then to observe, that it is perfectly in the power of this country, by degrees, to impart to the Hindoos our language; afterwards through that medium, to make them acquainted with our easy literary compositions, upon a variety of subjects; and, let not the idea hastily excite derision, *progressively* with the simple elements of our arts, our philosophy and religion. These acquisitions would silently undermine, and at length subvert, the fabric of error; and all the objections that may be apprehended against such a change, are, it is confidently believed, capable of a solid answer.

The first communication, and the instrument of introducing the rest, must be the English language; this is a key which will open to them a world of new ideas, and policy alone might have impelled us, long since, to put it into their hands.

To introduce the language of the conquerors, seems to be an obvious mean of assimilating the conquered people to them. The Mahomedans, from the beginning of their power, employed the Persian language in the affairs of government, and in the public departments. This practice aided them in maintaining their superiority, and enabled them, instead of depending blindly on native agents, to look into the conduct and details of public business, as well as to keep intelligible registers of the income and expenditure of the state. Natives readily learnt the language of government, finding that it was necessary in every concern of revenue and of justice; they next became teachers of it; and in all the provinces over which the Mogul Empire extended, it is still understood, and taught by numbers of Hindoos.

It would have been our interest to have followed their example; and had we done so on the assumption of the Dewannee, or some years afterwards, the English language would now have been spoken and studied by multitudes of Hindoos throughout our provinces. The details of the revenue would, from the beginning,

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have been open to our inspection; and by facility of examination on our part, and difficulty of fabrication on that of the natives, manifold impositions of a gross nature, which have been practised upon us, would have been precluded. An easy channel of communication also, would always have been open between the rulers and the subjects; and numberless grievances would have been represented, redressed, or prevented, which the ignorance of the former in the country languages, and the hindrances experienced by the latter in making their approaches, have sometimes suffered to pass with impunity, to the encouragement of new abuses. We were long held in the dark, both in India and in Europe, by the use of a technical revenue language; and a man of considerable judgment, who was a member of the Bengal administration near twenty years since, publicly animadverted on the absurdity of our submitting to employ the unknown jargon of a conquered people. It is certain, that the Hindoos would easily have conformed to the use of English; and they would still be glad to possess the language of their masters, the language which always gives weight and consequence to the natives who have any acquaintance with it, and which would enable every native to make his own representations directly to the Governor-General himself, who, it may be presumed, will not commonly, henceforth, be chosen from the line of the Company's servants, and therefore may not speak the dialects of the country. Of what importance it might be to the public interest, that a man in that station should not be obliged to depend on a medium with which he is unacquainted, may readily be conceived.

It would be extremely easy for government to establish, at a moderate expense, in various parts of the provinces, places of gratuitous instruction in reading and writing English: multitudes, especially of the young, would flock to them; and the easy books used in teaching, might at the same time convey obvious truths on different subjects. The teachers should be persons of knowledge, morals and discretion; and men of this character could impart to their pupils much useful information in discourse: and to facilitate the attainment of that object, they might at first make some use of the Bengaleze tongue. The Hindoos would, in time, become teachers of English themselves; and the employment of our language in public business, for which every political reason remains in full force, would, in the course of another generation, make it very general throughout the country. There is nothing wanting to the success of this plan, but the hearty patronage of government. If they wish it to succeed, it can and must succeed. The introduction of English in the administration of the revenue, in judicial proceedings, and in other business of government, wherein Persian is now used, and the establishment of free-schools for instruction in this language, would insure its diffusion over the country, for the reason already suggested, that the interest of the natives would induce them to acquire it. Neither would much confusion arise, even at first, upon such a change: for there are now a great number of Portugueze and Bengaleze clerks in the provinces, who understand both the Hindostanny and English languages. To employ them in drawing up petitions to government, or its officers, would be no additional hardship upon the poorer people, who are now assisted in that way by Persian clerks; and the opportunity afforded to others who have sufficient leisure, of learning the language of the government gratuitously, would be an advantage never enjoyed under Mahomedan rulers.

With our language, much of our useful literature might, and would, in time, be communicated. The art of Printing, would enable us to disseminate our writings in a way the Persians never could have done, though their compositions had been as numerous as ours. Hence the Hindoos would see the great use we make of reason on all subjects, and in all affairs; they also would learn to reason, they would become acquainted with the history of their own species, the past and present state of the world; their affections would gradually become interested by various engaging works, composed to recommend virtue, and to deter from vice; the general mass of their opinions would be rectified; and above all, they would see a better system of principles and morals. New views of duty as rational creatures would open upon them; and that mental bondage in which they have long been holden would gradually dissolve.

To this change, the true knowledge of nature would contribute; and some of our easy explanations of natural philosophy might undoubtedly, by proper means, be made intelligible to them. Except a few Brahmins, who consider the concealment of

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of their learning as part of their religion *, the people are totally misled as to the system and phœnomena of nature; and their errors in this branch of science, upon which divers important conclusions rest, may be more easily demonstrated to them, than the absurdity and falsehood of their mythological legends. From the demonstration of the true cause of eclipses, the story of *Rageo*, and *Ketco*, the dragons, who when the sun and the moon are obscured are supposed to be assaulting them, a story which has hitherto been an article of religious faith, productive of religious services among the Hindoos †, would fall to the ground; the removal of one pillar, would weaken the fabric of falsehood; the discovery of one palpable error, would open the mind to farther conviction; and the progressive discovery of truths, hitherto unknown, would dissipate as many superstitious chimeras, the parents of false fears, and false hopes. Every branch of natural philosophy might in time be introduced and diffused among the Hindoos. Their understandings would thence be strengthened, as well as their minds informed, and error be dispelled in proportion.

But perhaps no acquisition in natural philosophy would so effectually enlighten the mass of the people, as the introduction of the principles of mechanics, and their application to agriculture and the useful arts. Not that the Hindoos are wholly destitute of simple mechanical contrivances. Some manufactures, which depend upon patient attention and delicacy of hand, are carried to a considerable degree of perfection among them; but for a series of ages, perhaps for two thousand years, they do not appear to have made any considerable addition to the arts of life. Invention seems wholly torpid among them; in a few things, they have improved by their intercourse with Europeans, of whose immense superiority they are at length convinced; but this effect is partial, and not discernible in the bulk of the people. The scope for improvement, in this respect, is prodigious.

What great accessions of wealth would Bengal derive from a people intelligent in the principles of agriculture, skilled to make the most of soils and seasons, to improve the existing modes of culture, of pasturage, of rearing cattle, of defence against excesses of drought, and of rain; and thus to meliorate the quality of all the produce of the country. All these arts are still in infancy. The husbandman of Bengal just turns up the soil with a diminutive plough, drawn by a couple of miserable cattle; and if drought parches, or the rain inundate the crop, he has no resource; he thinks he is destined to this suffering, and is far more likely to die from want, than to relieve himself by any new or extraordinary effort. Horticulture is also in its first stage: the various fruits and esculent herbs, with which Hindostan abounds, are nearly in a state of nature; though they are planted in inclosed gardens, little skill is employed to reclaim them. In this respect likewise, we might communicate information of material use to the comfort of life, and to the prevention of famine. In silk, indigo, sugar, and in many other articles, what vast improvements might be effected by the introduction of machinery. The skilful application of fire, of water, and of steam, improvements which would thus immediately concern the interest of the common people, would awaken them from their torpor, and give activity to their minds. At present it is wonderful to see how entirely they resign themselves to precedent: *custom* is the strongest law to them. *Following implicity*, seems to be instinctive with them, in small things as well as great. The path which the first passenger has marked over the soft soil, is trodden so undeviatingly in all its curves, by every succeeding traveller, that when it is perfectly beaten, it has still only the width of a single track.

But undoubtedly the most important communication which the Hindoos could receive through the medium of our language, would be the knowledge of our religion, the principles of which are explained in a clear, easy way, in various tracts circulating among us, and are completely contained in the inestimable volume of Scripture. Thence they would be instructed in the nature and perfections of the one true God, and in the real history of man; his creation, lapsed state, and the means of his recovery, on all which points they hold false and extravagant opinions; they would see a pure, complete, and perfect system of morals and of duty, enforced by the most awful sanctions, and recommended by the most interesting motives; they would learn the accountableness of man, the final judgment he is to undergo, and the eternal state which is to follow. Wherever this knowledge should be received, idolatry, with all the rabble of its impure deities, its monsters of wood and stone, its

* Page 48.

† Page 66; and Bernier, Tome II. page 102.

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its false principles and corrupt practices, its delusive hopes and vain fears, its ridiculous ceremonies and degrading superstitions, its lying legends and fraudulent impositions, would fall. The reasonable service of the only, and the infinitely perfect God, would be established: love to him, peace and good-will towards men, would be felt as obligatory principles.

It is not asserted, that such effects would be immediate or universal; but admitting them to be progressive, and partial only, yet how great would the change be, and how happy at length for the outward prosperity, and internal peace of society among the Hindoos! Men would be restored to the use of their reason; all the advantages of happy soil, climate, and situation, would be observed and improved; the comforts and conveniencies of life would be increased; the cultivation of the mind, and rational intercourse, valued; the people would rise in the scale of human beings; and as they found their character, their state, and their comforts, improved, they would prize more highly, the security and the happiness of a well ordered society. Such a change would correct those sad disorders which have been described, and for which no other remedy has been proposed, nor is in the nature of things to be found.

Desirable as it must be that such animating prospects were realized, and reasonable as the grounds on which they are held out are presumed to be, it is nevertheless probable, that various objections, more or less plausible, may be started against all that has been advanced. These objections, as far as they are foreseen, shall now be distinctly met; and it is hoped, that upon examination, none of them will be found to possess that substance and validity, which we are entitled to require in arguments opposed to a scheme resting on principles the most incontrovertible, and having for its end the most diffusive good.

First. The plan here proposed, presenting so new an association of ideas, so strange a revolution, as the abject Bengaleze using the language and the light of Europe, may upon the very suggestion of it, be treated as in its nature *idle, visionary,* and *absurd.*

But this would be the decision of prejudice, rather than the conclusion of mature reflection and reason. If the character of the Hindoos proceeded only from a physical origin, there might be some foundation for thinking it unalterable; but nothing is more plain, than that it is formed chiefly by moral causes, adequate to the effect produced: if those causes therefore can be removed, their effect will cease, and new principles and motives will produce new conduct and a different character. It is unwarrantable to infer, that because the Hindoos, or to narrow the term, the Bengaleze, are at present low in their sentiments, conduct, and aims, they must always remain so. We cannot presume from the past state of any people, with respect to improvement in arts, that they would, under different circumstances, for ever continue the same. The history of many nations who have advanced from rudeness to refinement, contradicts such an hypothesis; according to which, the Britons ought still to be going naked, to be feeding on acorns, and sacrificing human victims in the Druidical groves. In fact, what is now offered, is nothing more than a proposal for the further civilization of a people, who had very early made a considerable progress in improvement; but who, by deliberate and successful plans of fraud and imposition, were rendered first stationary, then retrograde. These considerations alone, forbid us to assume, that if they were released from the darkness and stupefaction of ignorance and superstition, the human mind could not among them, regain some ordinary degree of elasticity; or that if light shone upon them, they would still be incapable of seeing or judging for themselves. Let it however be again observed, that the argument maintained here supposes only a *gradual* change. If we bring into *immediate* contrast, the *present state* of the Hindoos, and the *full, general, accomplishment* of such a change, tacitly sinking in our comparison, a long series of years, and of slow progressive transitions, we shall indeed form to ourselves a picture of egregious contrarieties, but it will not be a just representation. Nothing is contended for, which cannot be supported from the nature of man, and the experience of past ages.

Second. Nearly allied to the objection now considered, is another which some persons acquainted with the Hindoo character and habits, and possibly apologists for them, may derive from the *attachment of that people to their own modes and customs.* "If," may it be said, "the Bengaleze are not to be reckoned below the reach of in-

"struction,

"struction, and incapable of new perceptions and views, still their attachment to "long established opinions and usages, is so rooted, as to form an *insuperable obstacle* "to such an innovation as is proposed; and therefore the scheme may at least be "regarded as *impracticable*."

Is this argument however, quite philosophical? Must it be granted, without fair trial, that there is any portion of the human race, upon which reason and science can have *no* influence, which is doomed by nature to perpetual ignorance and prejudice? It is true that the Hindoos have a strong predilection for their system; but still it must be remembered, that in the bulk of the people, this is a predilection consequent of a privation of light, and riveted by the errors which darkness generates, not an attachment which has resisted the light, or as have ever been tried by it. Many Europeans have implicitly adopted an overstrained notion of the immutability of Hindoo opinions in matters of religion, and of the obstinacy of the people in retaining their own practices, even in civil life. But if we look to facts, we shall find that a variety of sects have prevailed, and still prevail, among them. The rise, especially of the *Seeks*, a new religious order, numerous and powerful, who have abjured the Brahminical faith, is sufficient to evince that the Hindoos are capable of considerable fluctuations of opinion. Hitherto indeed they have more commonly fluctuated only from one delusion to another; though it must be allowed, that the system of the *Seeks*, if the accounts which have been received of it are accurate, is comparatively simple and rational; and we cannot without wonder behold a set of Hindoos casting off at once, in the heart of their country, the whole load of Brahminical incumbrances, and as it should seem, renouncing polytheism and the worship of images*. A sight far more pleasing has also been exhibited to us, in the conversion of Hindoos to the divine religion of the Gospel. These were not encouraged by an armed protection, or actuated by the prospect of conquest, which may have stimulated the followers of the *Seeks*; but in opposition to the allurements and terrors of the world, they yielded to conviction, and rendered homage to the truth. This important fact, which is perfectly established, it may suffice barely to state here, since there will be occasion, in speaking to a following objection, to which it more pointedly applies, to enlarge upon it. When we read of these things on the one hand, and on the other of the extremities which Hindoos have sometimes endured through the bigotry of their Mahomedan masters, or from the pressure of misfortune, rather than submit to apprehended contamination, what is the inference fairly deducible from these dissimilar views but this, that whether the dread either of dishonour in this life, or of degradation in the next transmigration; whether resentment, or the idea of acquiring distinguished merit, were the principle from which these people suffered, still what terror could not induce them, misguided as they were by false notions, to relinquish, they yielded voluntarily to reason and persuasion.

If we now turn to instances of a more familiar nature, in the affairs of common life, here too actual experience will inform us, that it is not insuperably difficult to induce the Indians to depart from old established practices, and to adopt new ones. One or two cases of pre-eminent magnitude and notoriety will suffice to confirm this position. Raw-silk, as is well known, has been for many years a great article of commerce in Bengal. The natives had their own methods of winding it, and much attachment to those methods, defective as they were. The India Company attempted to introduce the Italian mode of winding this article, a mode more complex, but far more perfect; they have completely succeeded, and that mode is now practised in all parts of the country. So again with respect to the culture and manufacture of indigo, which the skill and industry of Europeans have, within these last twelve years, introduced into Bengal, and have now rendered an immense article of commerce between that country and Europe: the natives, though possessed of the indigo plant, from which their dyers extracted a very inferior substance for domestic purposes, held the culture of it rather in disesteem, and had no idea of those modes, and that scale of manufacture, of which the Europeans gave them examples; but those examples they now begin to follow on their own account, and there is reason to believe the Hindoos will come in for a share of the produce of this article in the London markets. Be it acknowledged then, that they are now incurious, and without love of learning; yet make it their interest, and they will attend to new discoveries; make it easy for them also to know the English language, and they will acquire it; show them profitable improvements in agriculture and the arts, and they will imitate them; make

* See Mr. Wilkins's account of the *Seeks*, in the first volume of the Asiatic Transactions.

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make it in short their interest, and why may they not become *in time* students, and even teachers of natural philosophy?

Let not the idea be hastily treated as chimerical, if we add that the India Company possessing the revenues of a great country, might very beneficially for themselves and that country, set the example in introducing such improvements. It would be worthy of them to turn their attention to this fruitful subject, to employ skilful artists of various kinds in ascertaining what improvements are practicable, and in carrying plans for them into execution. Were such a design to be taken up, with due zeal, by the Company, and their governments abroad, the expense and labour would assuredly be repaid in the end, probably by specific returns, but certainly by the augmentation of the agriculture and commerce of the country, and the general effects upon society. In like manner, if *after the English language begun to be diffused,* seminaries, with suitable apparatus, were instituted, for gratuitous instruction in natural philosophy, and premiums assigned to those who should excel, young persons, both Hindoos and Mahomedans, would become students and candidates; and if those who were found competent, were at length to be taken as assistant teachers, with suitable salaries, such a measure would prove a new and powerful means of establishing this species of knowledge. If a kind, patient, and encouraging conduct, were observed towards the Hindoos; that contempt with which Europeans in general regard them, restrained; and their first inaptitude borne with; it cannot be irrational to expect, that in things which come home to their business and interest, which respect the truths of nature, and the improvements of art, such a conduct should be productive of success. Many of the Hindoos and Mahomedans are brought up to the ready practice of writing and accounts; and persons of this class might be more easily carried on further.

THIRD. It may be objected, with more plausibility, that the *Brahmins, by their determined opposition to innovations, which would so essentially affect their interests, would prevent the introduction or success of them.*

It is certainly natural to suppose, that they could not look with indifference upon any attempt *from which they might apprehend danger*, to that system whence they "have their wealth," their honour, and their influence. It shall be readily admitted therefore, that *upon any serious alarm* for the stability of these distinctions, such opposition as should be within the power of that order of men might be expected. But though it will be proper to consider the effect of that opposition, and the force of the objection grounded upon it, we must previously maintain that it can constitute no reason at all against endeavouring, by prudent and pacific means, to make the truth known; for to admit this, would be to make the resistance of those who profit by abuses, an argument for continuing to tolerate them, and upon the same principle, Christianity had never been propagated.

To objections of a prudential or political kind, it is one main design of this piece to oppose answers founded on considerations of a like nature; and we venture to believe, that if the cause here pleaded for, rested on this ground alone, it could have nothing to fear. But the employment of political arguments does not oblige us to decline the use of others justly applicable to the subject; and upon the present occasion, it would be strange to omit one of decisive weight, which flows from the very nature and principles of Christianity.

The divine authority of that religion, its unrivalled excellence, and incomparable fitness to promote the happiness of man, its whole tenor, and many particular injunctions and encouragements which it holds forth, impose upon those who profess subjection to it, the duty of contributing to diffuse, by all proper methods, the knowledge and influence of it in the world. * No man who takes the Gospel as the standard of his reasoning, can for a moment dispute this position; to deny it, would be virtually to deny the authority of Christ, and therefore it will not be expected, that we should enter here into the proof of a position which rests upon the truth of Christianity itself. But affirming as we may with perfect right, the validity of this argument, it will apply to communities as well as individuals; the duty is incumbent upon this nation, and it is augmented two-fold by the addition of that which we owe to the misguided Pagans who are become our subjects.

Having asserted the regard due to this important argument, let us proceed, in the next place, to examine how far the present objection is warranted, in ascribing so great an efficacy to the opposition of the Brahmins; or in other words, to inquire into the

the extent and probable amount of their counter-action, *still supposing their resistance to be strongly excited*; for here it will be proper to remark, that in general where they see no indication of *persecution*, they are not likely to feel any alarm. As the more learned and ingenious of them lead a retired life, inattentive to novelties, so the rest, chiefly men busied in worldly concerns, possess the confidence which often belongs to deluded ignorance. They know that their system is held by numerous nations. They believe from their legends, that it always has been, and always will be so. They possess the same spirit as that Pagan votary of old, who felt himself quoting a fact of universal notoriety and authority, sufficient to appease a popular tumult, when he affirmed that the image of the great goddess Diana fell down from Jupiter. When therefore they see a few simple foreigners offering "certain strange "things" to the ears of their people, they may be ready secretly, if not to use the language of the conceited Athenians, yet to say with a more ancient scoffer, "what "do these feeble Jews?" Still less will the people be apprehensive about consequences. And whilst things continue in this state, it will be the business of Christian teachers to confine themselves chiefly to the positive declarations of the Gospel, giving no occasion for an imputation which indeed they should never wish justly to incur, that of being "blasphemers," or resorting to abusive language in speaking of the Hindoo gods, or the Hindoo absurdities. They have greater themes; "tempe-"rance, righteousness, and judgment to come;"—the noble topics brought forward by St. Paul to the superstitious Athenians. "God that made the world..... the "Lord of Heaven and Earth, who is not worshipped with men's hands..... who "giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things..... in whom we live, move, and "have our being..... And that forasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we "ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by "art and man's device..... And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but "now commandeth all men, every where to repent; because he hath appointed a "day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath "ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised "him from the dead."

If by such doctrines as these, or the fruits of them, resentment and opposition should be provoked, let us now consider what the utmost activity of opposition so stimulated could effect. Usually true religion has been combated, and false religions have been upheld, either by fraud or force, or by both. What artifice, imposture, misrepresentation, and vicious indulgence have not been able to effect, persecution and the coercion of the secular power have been called in to accomplish. False religion shuns fair examination; before this test it cannot stand. Such is the force of truth, that on the first promulgation of Christianity, it prevailed against all the deceits, impositions, ignorance, prejudice, and prescriptive authority of the ancient superstition, aided by the utmost cruelties that tyrannic governments could inflict. Now in the present case, the Brahmins will not possess the instrument most effectual for the support of religious error and imposture, that is, the power of the sword. They may be able to strengthen indisposition to new opinions by their personal influence, by availing themselves of traditional respect and existing habits, by venting calumnies, by denouncing spiritual judgments, especially that most formidable of their punishments, loss of caste; and it shall be granted, that these expedients may be sufficient to narrow the avenues, and retard the progress of truth. Such obstructions are to be contended with only by patient perseverance, maintained on Christian principles. But with these expedients, the means of opposition end; and if all such means have not prevented many Hindoos, even of the superior orders, on the Coast of Coromandel, from embracing the doctrine preached by a few humble Europeans, without national or local consideration, why should it be thought that pious, discreet, intelligent teachers, should have no success in Bengal, where the full establishment of our authority must at least secure the national religion from open contempt or disrespect. In that country, the gross absurdities of Heathenism have never yet been clearly exposed, and their abettors would find themselves extremely at a loss to defend by argument, assumptions wholly destitute of evidence, internal and external. Indeed how is it possible to justify to the common sense and imperfect natural light of men, the monstrous actions ascribed to the deities of the Hindoos, the immoral tenets established by the Hindoo system, and the immoral practices which they are used to sanction? These things could not stand before the pure and heart-searching word of God, which recommended by the lives of those who declared it, could not fail to make a powerful impression; especially as the Hindoos, who easily suppose the authenticity

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authenticity of other systems of religion, (thus with Pagan latitude concluding the certainty of that which they hold to be peculiarly assigned to them,) would not be inclined to controvert the truth of ours, and therefore would be reduced to the task of proving that their own is of divine authority. And the great difference between this kind of contest, and the religious controversies which have usually prevailed in Europe, ought to be considered. For here the dispute has commonly been, which of two contrary systems or tenets was the right one, and entitled to general acceptance. But the Hindoos do not wish for proselytes; they cannot receive any: on the other hand, Christian teachers neither able nor desirous to resort to any kind of compulsion, would be confined to a quiet exposition of the truths of their own system, and of the errors of Heathenism. From such a state of things no violent contention could easily arise. If finding excommunication insufficient to deter Hindoos from embracing Christianity, the Brahmins should attempt to follow with persecution those who had been converted, the calm interposition of the civil government to prevent such an infraction of justice and good order, would be sufficient. And if natives acknowledging from conscience the Christian revelation, at the hazard of sacrifices which the confession of it might require, were thereby rendered more honest, more faithful, and upright, would this be any injury to society? Need we ask whether it would make them better servants and agents, make them more useful and valuable in all the relations of life? Would not such persons be a real accession to European masters; and must it not be supposed, that men professing Christianity, whose interest would be promoted by employing such converts, would not reject them, upon a principle which even Paganism could not justify, that is, because they had honestly followed their convictions? In this way the great terror of excommunication would be obviated; for it is in the loss of employment, the want of subsistence, and protection, that its great evil consists. Let it not be said, that such views might tempt natives hypocritically to assume the profession of Christianity who would afterwards disgrace it. The truth is not to be kept back, nor a credible profession of it discouraged, because it may be thus abused; and those who should act so dishonestly, would generally soon find themselves despised by all parties.

Thus it is hoped a satisfactory answer has been offered to the objection now under consideration, even when admitted in its strongest form; that is, in supposing the great question respecting religion to be brought into early and direct controversy. Of such a collision of systems however, for some considerable time to come, the probability may, from the observations which have been advanced, be reasonably doubted; and if the more gradual process here assumed, a process by the concurring extension of the English language, should be followed, additional aids will, in the mean while, arise to the argument we maintain. That extension for instance, and the employment of the language in public business, cannot be disputed by the Brahmins; for how could they deny the same obedience to our government which they formerly yielded to the Mahomedan, and in a matter on which it is solely the province of government to decide? Brahmins themselves have spoken English for a century past; many of them now speak it; and no religious plea can therefore be henceforth advanced against the use of it. Improvements in manufactures and the arts, the Brahmins could not exclude; for in the adoption of some such improvements introduced by Europeans, they have also joined. The true system of natural philosophy, demonstrable as it is to the sight by machines, could be communicated to the Mahomedans, through whom it would have a wide diffusion, even if the Brahmins could prevent all Hindoos from attending to it, which is not to be imagined; nor could such an expedient occur to them until the progress of light had made an impression. That progress it is probable, would operate silently with persons who would not choose to encounter the painful feelings attendant on the dereliction of caste; and in this way, without any great external change which should excite alarm, a gradual enlargement of views and opinions, guided by that spirit of order and obedience which the Gospel eminently inculcates, and operating rather to the prevention of any vehement conflict of opinions, might take place, to the true happiness, as far as it went, of all parties.

Fourth. It may possibly occur to some of the readers of this tract, that the *Portugueze of India, many of whom speak English, are nevertheless still a vicious and contemptible race.*—There are among them, it must be admitted, many who cannot be cleared from this imputation. These men, descendents of the Portuguese soldiers and free-booters of a rude age, and of the lowest Bengaleze women, born in the

the meanest stations, dispersed under governments foreign to them, adopted by no other class of society, commonly without education, retaining only the errors of the Roman Catholic persuasion, grow up in ignorance, immorality, and superstition, like the Heathen around them; and if they know the English language, it is but imperfectly and colloquially. They cannot be referred to as specimens of the effects of Christianity, any more than some of the Indians of America, for they understand and possess hardly any thing of it beyond the name. But there is another description of persons ranking under the general denomination of Portuguese, more respectable; persons of some education, who are clerks, traders, or merchants. These are often men of decent lives and tolerable information; they are, in some degree, an improving set of people, and have clearly profited from their acquaintance and intercourse with Europeans, particularly the English. Now the proposed plan of communicating instruction to the Hindoos, through the medium of our language, does not suppose that the vilest out-casts of society are first to be selected for the purpose, or that a new name merely is to be imparted, but that men of substance and consideration, men employed in the affairs of government, connected with the revenues and with the administration of justice, will procure for their children, if not for themselves, the knowledge of a tongue which will then be necessary in transacting business; and that the instruction to be conveyed by this, or any other vehicle, shall be important and practical.

Fifth. Another objection may arise from *the result of the direct attempts which been made to enlighten the Hindoos*, by the preaching of the Christian religion: It has been said by some, that *the success of such attempts has been very small, and has been confined to the Parriars and others of the lowest castes.*——This statement is, in the first place, very erroneous; and in the next, to infer from it the impracticability of extending, by any efforts however strenuous, by any means however prudent, and under any circumstances however favourable, the influence of Christianity in Hindostan, would be altogether illogical and fallacious. Little stress shall be laid here upon the attempts of Roman Catholics; for it must be confessed, that though they made numerous converts, they too often only changed one set of ceremonies and images for another. Yet it must also be admitted, that the Romish establishments in Europe have shewn a zeal in this matter, much superior to that of any of the Protestant nations; and that Xavier, who traversed a great part of the coasts and islands of India, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and appears to have been a pious indefatigable man, planted the Gospel in various places, in a way that might have led to a large extension of it, if his labours and zeal had been well seconded. The efforts of the Dutch to establish Christianity in their Indian settlements, as being made under circumstances more similar to our own, may deserve greater attention. There was, in the earlier periods of that republic, a very laudable spirit in the government at home for the promotion of this object, and the number of native Christians in their colonies abroad was very considerable. Baldæus, the author of the History of Ceylon, a person of great credit, who was one of the Dutch ministers there in the last century, and wrote from his own knowledge, has stated that in the year 1663, the Christians in the province of Jaffnapatnam, * amounted (exclusive of slaves) to sixty-two thousand, many of whom must no doubt have been educated in the Romish churches, which the Portuguese had founded there; but it is extremely worthy

* The inhabitants of Jaffnapatnam are Malabars, known to have come originally from the continent, and are a distinct people from the Cingaleze, who possess the rest of the island, and follow the religion of *Bowde*, or *Bhoudda*, whom the Brahmins treat as a heretic; whilst some learned Europeans are inclined with great appearance of reason to believe, that his religion, which prevails over many countries of the East, is more ancient in India than the Brahminical system. He is mentioned by Jerome, Clemens Alexandrinus, and other authors of antiquity, and is now held to be the same as the *Sommonacodom* of Siam, the *Foe* of China, and the *Saca* of Japan. See in the first volume of the Asiatic Transactions a curious and learned paper, which has relation to this subject, by *William Chambers, Esq.*

A premature and lamented death has since deprived learning and society of this excellent man, who to an exquisite skill in several Oriental languages, joined a very uncommon knowledge of Asiatic history and manners. But these qualities were in him only themes of inferior praise. He exhibited, during a long residence in India, in all his relations, employments, and intercourses, a consistent and distinguished example of the Christian character: and from him, inquisitive and ingenious natives, both Mahomedans and Hindoos, with whom it was his practice often to converse, received at once just views and favourable impressions of Christianity. If the occasion had permitted, it would only have been doing justice to his name to place it in a far more conspicuous station than the present note assigns to it; and for this particular reason, among many others, that he was always a strenuous advocate for the diffusion of the Gospel in the East. He had himself begun, with great care, a translation of the Gospels into Persian. 1797.

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worthy of remark, that this author declares the number of *children in the schools*, maintained by the Dutch government, to have risen at the time of his departure from the island, *to eighteen thousand.*

The learned John Leusden, Professor of Hebrew at Utrecht, about the end of the last century, produced several letters from his correspondents, which gave the following further accounts of the state of Christianity in the Dutch possessions in Ceylon. " Mr. Herman Specht, minister of the Gospel at Columbo, writes, that in " the province of Jaffnapatnam, without including Manaar, which appertains to it, " there are, according to the last computation and the list sent thence to us, one " hundred and forty-one thousand four hundred and fifty-six Christians, who have " five pastors to take care of them." The same Mr. Specht, in another letter from Columbo, dated January 6th, 1688, says, " the number of converted Indians, who " have embraced Christianity, is in the space of four years greatly encreased; for " the provice of Jaffnapatnam, subject only to the Dutch East India Company, hath " two hundred and seventy-eight thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine inhabitants; " among whom there are Indians professing to be Christians, one hundred and " eighty-eight thousand three hundred and sixty-four*." Another very respectable authority of the same period informs us, that " the Dutch East India Company " maintain in the Indies, thirty or forty ministers for the conversion of poor Infidels, " who are under their dominion, and are at the annual expense of £. 10,000. for " this purpose, and have hereby converted *many hundred thousands of them to the* " *true Christian faith*; and for the further propagating of it, have lately erected a " college in the Island of Ceylon, in which one place only they have above eighty " thousand converted Indians *upon the roll*, for whose use they print bibles, " catechisms, and many other books †."

The Dutch Company however, it appears from recent information, never could get a sufficient number of ministers to undertake the work of propagating the Gospel in those countries, or even to serve the churches which had been founded in them; and in later times, the funds allotted for the support of those churches and of the clergy there, have been more and more curtailed; so that from want of labourers, of maintenance, and zeal, Christianity has greatly declined in most of the Dutch settlements, through the course of the last fifty years.

Nearer to our own days, the single Protestant mission which has been seriously prosecuted, that of the Danes at Tranquebar, under the patronage of the English Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, though extremely limited in its funds, and aided by little, if any, territorial or commercial influence, has produced solid and valuable effects, not among the lowest castes only, but among the Brahmins and Pandarims, persons of the highest order and greatest knowledge; and some of the converts have themselves become useful teachers to their countrymen. There has been, since the beginning of this century, a succession of zealous missionaries at Tranquebar, who by no other means than preaching the truth, and exposing the errors of Heathenism, have won multitudes over to the faith of Christ, and formed several respectable churches on the Malabar Coast ‡. The congregations of native Christians under this mission, have indeed been diminished by the wars and calamities, which within the last twenty years have ravaged the Carnatic; but upon the whole, the number of converts made by it, in spite of all the opposing terror of exclusion from their own tribes, has been very considerable; and it may be asserted, upon unquestionable

* Millar's Propagation of Christianity, Vol. II. page 318, in which is cited *Mastricht*'s Theologica Theo-practica.——If it were asked, whether all these converts were sincere in their profession, it might be answered, that probably some were ignorant and some hypocritical; but so would the result be upon any large survey, even in Europe Yet to have discarded the horrid idolatry and mythology of the Hindoos, and to come under the stated instructions of a pure and divine system, would be important changes.

† A proposal from the eminent Dean Prideaux to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Tennison) for the propagation of the Gospel in the English settlements in the East Indies, contained in a letter to his grace, dated the 20th January 1694-5. In this letter, the Dean greatly complains of the indisposition disposition of the English East India Company to the good work which he recommends. The Company, then under the management of Sir Josiah Child, must have much declined from its earlier zeal for the honour of religion.

See the *Life of Dean Pridcaux.*

‡ " The Danish mission of Tranquebar was " very highly extolled by several people here, " (Columbo in Ceylon) who at the same time " assured me, that had the Catholics in their en- " deavours to propagate Christianity in India, con- " ducted themselves with equal gentleness, mode- " ration, and Christian charity, devoid of avarice, " haughtiness, and violence, the major part of the " numerous inhabitants of Asia would, at this " present time, have been converts to this doc- " trine."—*Thuneberg's Travels, Vol.* IV. *Anno*, 1778.

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able authority, that many of them have been truly sincere and earnest, living and dying in a manner worthy of the Christian profession. It is evident then, that the light of Christianity has not been held out by this mission without effect. Such is the force of eminent goodness, that the name of *Swartz* in particular, a missionary still living, who has laboured with a spirit truly apostolical for more than thirty years in that country, exposed to its hottest sun, and furnished only with the scantiest necessaries of life, is revered all over the peninsula of India, by Hindoos, Mussulmans, and Europeans. The Hindoo King of Tanjore, when dying, was solicitous to make him the guardian of his heir, and to put the whole management of affairs into his hands, a trust which he declined. The famous Hyder Ali, received him as an envoy on the part of the English, and offered to take his word as the guarantee of a proposed engagement, when, as we have been assured, he would trust no one else; and Colonel Fullarton, who was commander of an English army in that country, though severe in his strictures upon others, has declared publicly, that Mr. *Swartz* singly had retrieved the European character in India. This mission, supported by men of such a stamp, has still real success in educating the young, and converting the adult, not to a new name only, but to a better life and conversation. And if the number of missionaries there were greater, it cannot reasonably be doubted, that the success would be proportionably increased.

The history of the Romish missions proves, that it is practicable to induce multitudes of the professors of Hinduism, to embrace a new faith. The present low state of Christianity, both in those missions, and in the Dutch establishments, is clearly to be ascribed, not to the determined adherence of the Indians to their own tenets, but to the remissness, indifference, and at length almost total neglect of the Europeans, whose too general disregard of the spirit, and precepts of their own professed faith, is, it must be acknowledged, a hindrance of another kind, more lamentable and pernicious than all the rest put together; for had they generally lived conformably to their religion, Hindostan would at this time probably have been Christian.

The observation therefore of a late writer, that "notwithstanding the labours of "missionaries for two hundred years, and the establishments of different Christian "nations who support and protect them, out of perhaps one hundred millions of "Hindoos, there are not twelve thousand Christians, and those chiefly Chandalas or "outcasts*," leads to a wrong conception of facts, and to conclusions totally unsupported. Though this number were correct, it ought by no means to be taken as the utmost possible product of united exertions for a long series of time; for nothing is plainer, than that these exertions, never great, never in any degree what they ought to have been, have gradually declined, except in the solitary instance of the small mission of Tranquebar, for more than a century past, and are in most places now entirely abandoned, not for want of success, but for want of the spirit that should animate such undertakings. Even if the success had never been greater than it is said to be at this day, and had been confined to the lower classes, who however have immortal souls, they who consider the value of Christianity, and the vast importance of the interests connected with it, as well as the opposition which the priests of other religions have uniformly made to it, would still think this success an object of very considerable magnitude. But we have seen what had been done in the times of Baldæus, and of Specht†, and we may judge how far it is reasonable to take the number of twelve thousand‡ in the year 1790, as the existing amount of Christians in Hindostan, when we may fairly state no less a number than one hundred and eighty thousand to have been existing in the year 1688, a full century earlier. Length of time however, can be no exact criterion in this case. Persecutions, wars, and famines, may reduce the number of Christians. A want of pastors may disperse them, and in a generation or two leave no vestige of flourishing churches. The diligence and earnestness employed in this work will in general be found the truest test, and wherever these have appeared, the effect has been proportionable. As to "the establishments of different Christian nations, who support and protect them," where are they? Exclusive, first of wandering Romish missionaries, who to do them justice subsist on little, and submit to a painful course of life, and next of the Tranquebar

* Sketches concerning the Hindoos, quoted in Dr. Robertson's Ancient India, page 230.

† Page 165, 166.

‡ A letter recently received from a very respectable person on the Coast of Coromandel, states, that in consequence of the capture of Ceylon by the English, twenty thousand native Christians in the province of Jaffnapatnam were left without pastors, and thence were falling off to Paganism. 1797.

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quebar mission already mentioned, which consists not of above seven or eight ministers, on very narrow appointments, where are the establishments, where are the support and protection? Do the Dutch, possessing many large islands and settlements, now maintain even a sufficient number of clergy for their factories? Do the British, the lords of immense territories, and of twenty-four millions of Heathen subjects, maintain a single missionary? *Pudet hoc opprobrium!* This is a very serious subject, which would require and well deserves a distinct consideration *.

The conclusion therefore, which the writer recently quoted, would draw, that the peculiarly obstinate attachment of the Hindoos to their religion, has prevented, and by parity of reason will ever continue to prevent, their conversion to Christianity, is repugnant to the past experience of Europeans. Wherever an attempt has been seriously and prudently made, a certain degree of success has followed it; and if such attempts were more extended, the success would be correspondent.

Doubtless there is always difficulty in turning men from error to truth; and those who have been taught to place a high degree of merit in abstinence from certain meats and liquors, will be prejudiced, as has also been objected, against a religion which treats these things as indifferent. But prudence and discretion will do much. The Danish missionaries have never encouraged converts to shock their Heathen neighbours, nor to run themselves into unnecessary expense and danger in this respect; for in imitation of the conduct of the first teachers of Christianity towards the Jews, whilst they have explained to them the allowableness of using any kind of food without exception, they have also inculcated the expediency, in their circumstances, of forbearance. But it is idle to lay any great stress as some have done upon such an impediment, when in order to real conversion, much greater obstacles must be overcome. Undoubtedly the grand hindrance, on the part of the Hindoos, to the reception of the Christian faith, is not so much an attachment to their religion, as the dreadful forfeitures which follow the dereliction of it,—excommunication from society, family, wife, children, inheritance, employment, subsistence, every thing valuable in life, and every thing necessary to its support; yet these prodigious sacrifices many have made for conscience sake; and if converts could have protection from persecution, and the means of subsisting themselves by honest labour, which among so many European Christians as are in Bengal could not be wanting, their numbers would be far more considerable than they are at present. In remoter ages, we know from undoubted authority, that the diffusion of Christianity in India, was more general than it has been in modern times†; but the people were the same, their religion and prejudices the same as they are now; nothing was different, but the ardour for propagating the Gospel; and when this ardour revives, in places where the ascendency of Europeans has prevailed over the Hindoo government, it may be expected that more homage will be paid to true religion, than it has yet received.

Sixth. If after all that has been already said of the causes by which the Hindoo character is formed, any person should still be willing to believe, *that nothing more is necessary for the social peace, order, and happiness, of our Asiatic subjects, than to enact good laws, and duly to administer them,* such persons may be pleased to consider

* National support is here spoken of. The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, before noticed, from their moderate funds, the subscription of individuals, have for a long series of years given an annual allowance to the Danish missionaries of Tranquebar, or more properly have upheld the valuable mission established there nearly since its commencement; and they wish to extend their labours both on the Coast and in Bengal; but their funds, enlarged as they have lately been, are not adequate to the scheme now proposed.

An evasive plea, with which some persons meet proposals of this kind, is hardly entitled to notice. "Let us, say they, begin at home;" as if they were hindered in any domestic plans of benevolence by such proposals; as if he who sincerely wishes the extension of religion at home, must not also wish it abroad; as if it were ability, and not will, for both, which is wanting; as if we ought to postpone the communication of light to other countries, whilst any individuals remain uninstructed, (though through the fault of appointed teachers,) among ourselves; as if the duties of sovereignty did not extend wherever we hold possessions; as if the communication of the Gospel to all our subjects, were not an indispensable duty, and the obligation to perform one duty, could justify the neglect of another both incumbent and practicable; as if in a word, a resident of this country, having a foreign estate peopled with Heathens, should not immediately attend to their religious instruction.

† A considerable church subsisted on the Coast of Malabar from a very early period, and when the Portuguese first visited India, the Christians on that coast were still very numerous and respectable. They were a simple people, and by a complication of artifice and force were brought into subjection to the Romish see, whence they were incorporated with the Portuguese and shared in their fate. See *Histoire du Christianisme des Indes, par la Croze,* and the Portuguese writers cited by him.

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consider a maxim which experience has established in the science of legislation, "that laws are of no avail without manners." Where the general spirit of a community runs counter to particular laws, those laws, instead of overcoming that disposition, more commonly lose their own efficacy, as may be seen in the case of duelling, and many other forbidden practices among ourselves. And it usually happens, that regulations which have the maintenance of good morals for their immediate object, fall sooner into neglect, and are infringed with more impunity, than those made to protect the property of individuals.

Our government in India is besides, in this respect, under some peculiar disadvantages. A handful of foreigners presides over a very numerous people, extremely corrupt, and fortified in their corruptions by their own institutions. Out of that mass, we must take the subordinate instruments of our administration in all departments, particularly in the courts of law, and in the police of very extensive provinces. The number of our courts, and of British judges or officers in them, from the heavy expense which they occasion, can hardly be made equal to what is required for the conveniency of the people, of whom also, many reside at a distance from the seats of justice, where moreover the formalities of procedure, and the accumulation of suits, necessarily produce delays repugnant to the nature and circumstances of that people, who earnestly desire prompt decisions.

It may easily be seen, that these causes, especially the national characteristics attaching to the multitudes whom we are obliged to employ in all the inferior lines of administration, would, notwithstanding the many excellent things done to render the fountains and the channels of justice pure, hinder the perfect operation of our legal institutions, even if it were in the nature of such institutions to furnish internal principles of morals, as well as to punish the external violations of right. That it is not, authority and experience concur to assure us. It is the judgment of the great Lord Bacon, a man pre-eminent in jurisprudence as well as in philosophy, "that "good government, and good laws, though they indeed nourish virtue when grown, "*do not much mend that seed.*" Corruption has destroyed many states, where legislation had attained to considerable perfection; and how plainly does it come within our own observation, that even in countries where the awful sanctions of true religion are added to the wisest laws, uprightly dispensed, all are found little enough to check the progress of depravity? The insufficiency of laws alone to this end, cannot then be better stated than in the words of another writer of superior order, which may close the discussion of a topic in itself so clear. "As for human laws, made to "encourage and requite virtue, or to check and chastise vice, it is also manifest that "they do extend to cases in comparison very few; and that even as to particulars, "which they touch, they are so easily eluded or evaded, that without intrenching "upon them, at least without incurring their edge, or coming within the verge of "their correction, men may be very bad in themselves, extremely injurious to their "neighbours, and hugely troublesome to the world; so that such laws hardly can "make tolerable citizens, much less thoroughly good men, even in exterior demeanor "and dealing. However no laws of men can touch internal acts of virtue or vice; "they may sometimes bind our hands, or bridle our mouths, or shackle our feet, "but they cannot stop our thoughts, they cannot still our passions, they cannot bend, "or break our inclinations; these things are beyond the reach of their cognizance, of "their command, of their compulsion, of their correction; they cannot therefore "render men truly good, or hinder them from being bad*."

SEVENTH. There is another species of objection, which does not peculiarly apply to the plan now in question, but equally to all schemes which go upon a principle of proselyting men of one religion to another. The objection is to the principle itself. It supposes that if any religion be necessary, the religion in which a man happens to be born, will do at least as well for him as any other; that being sincere in his hereditary religion, he will be safe and happy in a future state; and that it is therefore wrong to disturb him about any new one. Now this objection plainly assumes, that all religions, however contrary to each other, are much the same as to their end and efficacy. It must suppose, that they are all indifferent or all acceptable to the Deity; and if the latter, that either they had their origin from him, or that human inventions of various and opposite systems of faith and practice, according to the different tastes, fancies, habits of men, and their degrees of knowledge, are at least approved of by him.

This

* Dr. Barrow, Vol. II. page 335.

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This is no other than the old Heathen opinion, revived and extended by modern infidels *. But some men who have fallen into it perhaps carelessly, as an easy way of solving points dubious or disquieting to their minds, have surely not reflected on the gross and impious absurdities with which it is pregnant. Allowing that it does not mean to discard morals, it proceeds upon a fatal sophism, too common, that they may equally subsist with any or with no religion, and that only the duties which our fellow creatures claim, are important, those owing to God, mere ceremonies; it implies, that an infinitely pure, wise and good Being, may be pleased with rites fantastic, cruel, and impure, which in their nature violate every idea, even of morals; or what is nearly as monstrous, that he places on the same level, doctrines and services essentially contrary to each other, and many of them utterly unsuitable to his own holy character. In either case, the greatest outrage will at once be offered to right reason and to the infinite perfections of the divine nature. But one inference will thus be reserved, which it is to be feared is too often the main drift of all the crude profane notions unhappily indulged upon a subject the most momentous,—that no religion has an exclusive claim to be preferred, or that in other words, there is no such thing as a divine revelation; for if a revelation were acknowledged, the consequence must of course be, that it is entitled to supreme regard.

But this is directly to attack the truth of Christianity, which claims God for its author, and, including as it does, the Jewish and patriarchal dispensation, to be the only religion that he hath revealed. This is not the place to vindicate the justice of the claim, nor is it necessary. The truth of Christianity has been a thousand times proved, against every species of attack which the abilities or the passions of men have been able to devise. It stands upon such various invincible evidence, external and internal, as belongs to no other object of human belief; evidence sufficient to satisfy the most secret doubts of every honest inquirer, and to astonish him with its clearness and power. All the assaults of ancient and modern enemies have only served to establish the authenticity of Christianity more firmly. It gains by being examined. It courts the light. The age in which it was introduced, and made its way in the world against all opposing powers, was an age of light. With the revived and increased light of modern times, it has received new lustre and confirmation. Those superior geniuses, who have extended the sphere of human knowledge, have been steady believers in Christianity. The discoveries of science invalidate none of the truths of revelation. The improvement of the mental faculties yields no illumination that can disparage the matter, or lessen the importance of those truths. But in proportion as the investigation of nature, and of the character and state of man, enlarges his views of the great Creator, and his acquaintance with himself, he sees more of the suitableness of the Christian scheme, to the perfections of the one, and the condition of the other. It is by a gross perversion of language, that *the light of this advanced period* is spoken of, as affording any ground for disregarding the doctrines or the precepts of the Gospel. Men have indeed, by too general an agreement, departed from them in practice, and thence the transition is easy to a denial of their authority, the source of all which is corruption, and the consequence, a return to the darkness of error; yet this common, profane relaxation, in opinions and in manners, is all that is often meant by such phrases as "the light "of the eighteenth century;" and experience has shown, that wherever the Gospel has been obeyed, it has made communities and individuals better and more happy, as in proportion to the degree in which it has been rejected or slighted, vice and misery have prevailed. It is the only religion which ever has wrought any reformation among mankind; all other systems have made men easy in their immoralities. Christianity will allow no compromise with evil, and this is the true cause of the resistance made to it; men do not oppose it from the love of truth, or any honest intelligent conviction of its want of foundation, but because it holds out too strong a light, and too strict a rule. To argue therefore as if it were untrue, (which is indeed done when the sufficiency of any other is pleaded,) after every attempt to destroy its authority has ended in its stronger confirmation, is a high strain of unjustifiable assumption, and most indecorous in a country where this religion is the established faith,

* It is the creed of Voltaire, and many others styling themselves philosophers, who from pleading for toleration, moderation, indifference, in matters of religion, proceeded gradually, and by a thousand insidious arts, first to bring into contempt, and then to overturn the established faith of that country, in which they were left at liberty to enjoy even their most extravagant dogmas; and to effect this purpose, razed its civil constitution, its monarchy, all its existing establishments, to the foundation, covering them with anarchy and blood.

faith, and a part of the law of the land. This single consideration however, our national acknowledgment and profession of its truths, imposes upon us, as has been already stated, the obligation of communicating, as far as we are able, the blessings of it to the Heathen world, and precludes therefore the use of any such objection as we are now combating, especially in all national or public discussions of this subject.

It may not be unnecessary however, to repeat here, that every kind and degree of compulsion is utterly excluded from this scheme, as subversive of the rights of private judgment and conscience, and totally contrary to the spirit and genius of Christianity. The abuses which have been committed in this way, whether under the name of that religion, or avowedly in opposition to it, have furnished the enemies of revelation with a set of common-place objections, which also require some notice, because they are applied, not merely against religious persecution, but against the principle of propagating the knowledge of the Gospel in Pagan countries. "The "agitation of religious opinions," say those opposers, "and particularly of the doc- "trines of Christianity, has been the occasion of manifold contentions and immense "bloodshed." That is so say, in effect, that because some wicked men have persecuted their fellow-creatures for preaching or embracing Christianity, and others, professing that religion, have been guilty of similar cruelties against those who could not hold every dogma which they sought to impose, nothing should be done that might possibly awaken this persecuting spirit; men ought not to be disturbed in their errors, however fatal; and the occasional or possible abuse of a thing, however excellent in itself, is sufficient to decide against the dissemination or maintenance of it. The mere statement of these objections is enough to expose their weakness: they alledge the conduct of the greatest enemies of religion, against religion itself. They go to supersede reverence to God, love to man, obedience to conscience, and all freedom of opinion.

But the very ground of these objections, surely never sincere, has now ceased. Toleration in matters of religion is well understood. Religion is not propagated by force; and all that is now proposed is, that a certain moderate number of individuals, armed with nothing but truth, reason, and argument, shall in a mild, pacific way, communicate the Christian system to those who have never hitherto had an opportunity of hearing it, and who, whether they listen to it or not, certainly have need of its benign and salutary influences.

It is not, let us again disavow the idea, the introduction of a new set of ceremonies, nor even of a new creed, that is the ultimate object here. Those who conceive religion to be conversant merely about forms and speculative notions, may well think that the world need not be much troubled concerning it. No, the ultimate object is moral improvement. The pre-eminent excellence of the morality which the Gospel teaches, and the superior efficacy of this divine system, taken in all its parts, in meliorating the condition of human society, cannot be denied by those who are unwilling to admit its higher claims; and on this ground only, the dissemination of it must be beneficial to mankind.

Do we then wish to correct, to raise, to sweeten the social state of our Indian subjects? Would we at little cost, impart to them a boon, far more valuable than all the advantages we have derived from them? The Gospel brings this within our power. Of the effects which it would produce in civil society, if men acted according to its principles, we may, in the words of a distinguished prelate*, say, that "in superiors it would be equity and moderation, courtesy and affability, benignity "and condescension; in inferiors, sincerity and fidelity, respect and diligence. In "princes, justice, gentleness, and solicitude for the welfare of their subjects: in "subjects, loyalty, submission, obedience, quietness, peace, patience, and cheerful- "ness. In parents, tenderness, carefulness of their children's good education, "comfortable subsistence, and eternal welfare; in children, duty, honour, gratitude. "In all men, upon all occasions, a readiness to assist, to relieve, to comfort one "another. Whatsoever, in a word, is pure, and lovely, and good."—Can we help exclaiming, with the celebrated author of *the spirit of laws*,—"How admirable the "religion, which while it seems only to have in view the felicity of the other life, "constitutes the happiness of this†!"

And

* Bishop Horne. Sixteen Sermons, page 101. 282.

† L'Esprit des Loix, Liv. XXIV. Chap. 3.

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And is this the religion which we hesitate to communicate,—to communicate to those whose welfare it is alike our duty and our interest to consult? Is it not enough that more than thirty years have already elapsed, more than twenty millions of our subjects have passed into eternity, without our making any attempt to instruct them?

EIGHTH and LAST. Another objection still remains to be stated, one of an opposite nature to some of those which have been discussed, and in appearance more formidable than any of them. Its constituent idea is, *the danger which might result from the adoption of the proposed plan.* Put in its strongest and amplest terms, it may be thus expressed: "if the English language, if English opinions, and improve-"ments, are introduced in our Asiatic possessions, into Bengal for instance; if "Christianity, especially, is established in that quarter; and if, together with these "changes, many Englishmen colonize there, will not the people learn to desire "English liberty and the English form of government, a share in the legislation of "their own country, and commissions in the army maintained in that country? Will "not the army thence become, in time, wholly provincial, officered by natives of "India, without attachment to the sovereign state:—will not the people at length "come to think it a hardship to be subject, and to pay tribute, to a foreign country: "and finally, will they not cast off that subjection, and assert their independence?"

Before we proceed to offer a reply to this objection, it is fair to remark, that whoever seriously entertains it, cannot also entertain those which may be advanced against the practicability of the plan, or the possibility of its succeeding. And in like manner, he who thinks success hopeless, can feel no real alarm for the danger which another might conceive success to be capable of producing. Hence though every man is unquestionably entitled to follow the best decision of his own judgment, yet in this case, an opposition, increased in numbers by contradictory principles, would therefore be diminished in argumentative strength, since objections incompatible with each other could not both be valid.

It will be proper likewise, previously to separate and exclude from this complex objection, some parts of it, which can with no justice be reckoned among the imaginable consequences of any estimated improvement in the state of our Indian subjects. Such are the free colonization of Europeans in that country, and the gradual transfer of military appointments and military power into the hands of provincials. These are things which do not depend on the admission of any particular religion into our territories, or its exclusion; nor upon the will of the people inhabiting them; but upon the government of this country. They are wholly unnecessary; they would, in our humble apprehension, be most unwise; and that light which we now possess regarding our Eastern affairs, that sound policy in the management of them, of which late years have furnished so many proofs, forbid the admission of suppositions so superfluous and extravagant.

With respect to colonization, the nature of our connection with that country, renders the residence there of a certain number of Europeans, for the various lines of public service, necessary. The admission of a further number as merchants, navigators, artists, and professional men, is useful and important; but beyond such a fair proportion as may be requisite for these different lines of employment, and the prosecution of useful improvements and enterprizes, in which the energy and skill of Europeans are essential, their ingress into that country ought not to be permitted; for otherwise a new race might spring up, with larger pretensions, and more untractable than the Hindoos. Those also admitted should be laid under particular restrictions; the more considerable settlements should be confined to the sea coasts; and the laws against the entrance of unlicensed adventurers be strictly enforced; for these adventurers may be of nations hostile to our interests, they will be less known, less to be depended on by us, more liable to fail of success in their own views, and from necessity, be more likely to colonize. But in all the decent and liberal classes of Europeans, there is even an ardent desire to return at length to their native country; and hardly an instance can be found of any person, capable from his circumstances of following this course, who has deliberately chosen to make India his ultimate home. The state of native society there, may, no doubt, contribute to form this disposition; but the Indian climate is not congenial to the European constitution, and the strong endearing attachments of early days, with the rational judgment

judgment of maturer years, powerfully impel the natives of this happy island to their original seat*.

The other idea, which makes our Indian power to depend at length on provincial officers and soldiers, proceeds upon the supposition of previous unrestrained colonization, which has just been shown to be needless and inadmissible, and upon other imagined changes, into the probability of which we need not now examine. For upon any hypothesis compatible with our retention of the country, it is not conceivable how we should ever be exposed to the danger here alleged. Is it not among the first prerogatives of government to select its military servants? What inducement could possibly arise to transfer the delicate and important trust of military command from the natives of this country to those less connected with it? Do we act thus with our American colonies, peopled by subjects of the British race? As we now ultimately depend not only on British officers, but on British troops, *so*, in the opinion of most competent judges, an opinion which appears to be indisputably solid and important, *ought we to do in all time to come* †.

Among

* The following remarks, added as a postcript to the first copy of this tract, and intended to apply to the subject of the Company's charter, then about to be renewed, it may still not be improper to insert here.

" Lest the scope of these observations should " be misunderstood, the writer begs leave to de- " clare, that he is no advocate for any system " of intercourse between this country and our " Eastern territories, which shall give Europeans " an unlimited freedom of entrance there; but " would most earnestly deprecate all schemes, of " which such unlimited freedom should be the pro- " fessed basis, or the actual, though unavowed " consequence. There is a question concerned " here, of far greater importance than the merely " commercial one of an open or a restricted trade " to India; it is a question that involves in it the " welfare, both of Great Britain and of our Asiatic " possessions.

" If the subjects of this country are permitted, " at their pleasure, to visit those possessions as " they may our American colonies, though pro- " fessedly but for the purposes of traffic, great " numbers of them will settle; for mercantile " transactions must entail residence, because it " will be impossible for a government to say, that " all such transactions shall be closed, and the par- " ties be gone within a certain time, or to take " cognizance in this manner of the conduct of " every individual; and if such a measure were " at first attempted, it would not continue any " time. All the lines of trade and manufactures " would soon be overstocked, and then men would " seek to fasten themselves on the soil. Coloni- " zation would therefore very soon commence in " India, especially in Bengal; those whom uncon- " trouled enterprizes in commerce would carry " thither, would see a rich soil, apprehend great " scope for exertions, and regard the natives as a " subjected people, feeble, timid, and contemptible; " all things would tempt them, and many, both " agents and seamen, would remain. But the in- " crease of Europeans there would not be regulated " by the gradual progress of colonial industry. " Multitudes of the needy and the idle, allured by " the fame of that country, and eager to seize " novel privileges, would flock thither at once. " Britain would, in a short space, be thinned of " inhabitants, and those eastern provinces filled " with a new race of adventurers, many of them " low and licentious. Being there, they must " subsist; they would spread themselves through- " out the country, would run into the inland trade, " fix themselves wherever they could on the lands, " domineer over the natives, harass, extrude, ex- " asperate them, and at length provoke them to " plots and insurrections; they would be bold and " assuming towards our own government there; " its present form calculated chiefly for the na- " tives, would not be sufficiently coercive in such " a new state of things, and hardly any govern- " ment which we could maintain in that quarter, " would controul swarms of Europeans, thus let " loose, and animated by the spirit of adventure " and acquisition. Nor would the emigrations be " confined to our countrymen only. If we tole- " rated the practice of free colonization in India, " people from all the nations in Europe, would " resort thither, mix with other subjects, and ag- " gravate the mischiefs of such an invading sys- " tem. In a certain degree, we should have that " lawless destructive scene acted over again, " which the Spaniards exhibited when they first " poured into America. It was thus that the " Portuguese power in the East, declined. The in- " tolerable licence of the roving adventurers of that " nation, rendered them odious to the natives, and " armed the coasts and islands of India against " them, so that weakened before, they fell an easy " prey to the Dutch. And thus too, we should " ourselves be exposed, perhaps at no distant " period, to the danger of general convulsion and " revolt in those possessions, which prudently " guarded and cultivated, may under the favour " of Providence, to conciliate which should be our " first care, be preserved for ages, to our great ad- " vantage, and the happiness of their native in- " habitants.

" The question now therefore, with respect to " these possessions, is not, whether all British " subjects shall have a right to trade thither in " their own persons, but whether the natives " shall be protected from being over-run and op- " pressed by foreigners. A different cause recom- " mends, that the intercourse with these provinces " be still carried on by one national organ, like " the India Company. At first, such a collective " body was preferred, as a better defence against " the arbitrary and rapacious temper of the native " governments. Now that the countries are our " own, such a limited channel is also preferable, " to save this nation, and our Asiatic subjects, " from the evils which might accrue from too great " a transfusion of the people of Europe among the " Hindoos."

† If, upon premises very opposite to those on which the objections we are now answering are grounded, a doubt should be started of the propriety of keeping any people perpetually under foreign rule, this would be to agitate a question involving the right of conquest, and the nature of government; but it might perhaps be sufficient to reply, that we can foresee no period in which we may not govern our Asiatic subjects, more happily for them than they can be governed by themselves

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Among the articles unreasonably crowded into the objection now to be examined, are those which state the people as becoming, in consequence of some future supposed events and combinations, dissatisfied at the payment of a foreign tribute, and with subjection to a foreign country. Is it to be thought, that such ideas are then only to have existence, or that the people have in any past time been contented under the dominion of strangers? Surely not. The only point for consideration here is, their comparative acquiescence in this condition under their present circumstances, and under those which it is assumed may hereafter arise.

We shall now enter upon the consideration of the objection itself; and the first things which attract our attention here, are the *foundation* on which the whole of this objection rests, and the *principle* upon which it proceeds. The *foundation* is *pure hypothesis*, or conjecture; and hypothesis supported by no real experience of any case similar to the one assumed to happen, nor by any just analogy. Some general apprehension, prepossession, or unexamined suspicion, suggests the possibility of certain events; and to this suggestion, without any satisfaction concerning the premises on which it is advanced, or the conclusion deduced from it, without regard to all the other relations of the subject in question, we are required to give our assent. The *principle* of the objection, at least equally remarkable, is plainly no other than this, that to prevent the remotest chance of such consequences as the proposed improvements might produce, our Asiatic subjects must be for ever held in the same state of ignorance and error in which they now are. "Give them not," says the unstrained sense of this objection, "the light of true religion, teach them not a "better system of morals, provide no stated means for their public or private in- "struction, impart not to them our knowledge of nature, be not liberal to them, even "in communicating the principles of our arts; afford them, in a word, no benefit "whatever of light and improvement, lest our interest should in some future period "suffer; keep them blind and wretched for all generations, lest our authority should "be shaken, or our supremacy over them incur the slightest possible risk." Surely those who may have inconsiderably lent themselves to this objection, will not, upon a clear deliberate view of its principle, seek to justify or to contend for it. A Christian nation cannot possibly maintain or countenance such a principle To do so would be virtually to trample upon every sentiment which we profess in religion or in morals. It would be to make ourselves parties in all the impositions of the Brahminical system, and in effect to hold with its priests, the doctrine of Demetrius,* "by this craft, *we* have our wealth." To enlarge upon so very obvious an argument, must be unnecessary.

Besides the series of effects which the objection professedly supposes, certain other positions are tacitly comprehended in it, which next claim our notice. It implies, that the establishment of Christianity in a country may, on the whole, prove unfavourable, or less favourable than some other religious institution, to good government; that its efficacy may, on the whole, be inferior in securing the subordination, obedience, and attachment of the people, and the authority of the sovereign. Since reason, experience, and general consent, have fully decided against this position, it would be superfluous and unbecoming to enter into any refutation of it. It is certainly one of the grossest misconceptions of the nature and tendency of the religion of the Gospel, which is known to afford precepts, motives, and encouragements to lawful submission and good order, infinitely more powerful and efficacious than those of any other system. Its real genius is so contrary to licentiousness and anarchy, that as we have seen in a late memorable instance, their triumph can be raised only upon its extinction. If we would read the judgment of enlightened Europe upon this subject in a single sentence, the celebrated author already quoted, who spent a long life in profound and certainly unbigotted investigations into the nature of different systems of religion and law, may supply it. "True Christians," says he, "must be citizens "thoroughly enlightened respecting their duties, with the greatest zeal for fulfilling "them; the more they feel the obligations of religion, the more must they be "sensible of what they owe to their country. The principles of Christianity well "engraven on the heart, must be infinitely stronger than the false honour of monar- "chies, the humane virtues of republics, and the servile fear of despotic states†."

the

or any other power; and doing this we should not expose them to needless danger from without and from within, by giving the military power into their hands.

* Acts, Chap. 19.——Page 159.
† L'Esprit des Loix, Liv. XXIV. Chap. 6.

The objection implies also, that rather than expose ourselves to the possibility of suffering future evils, which it is assumed Christianity might ultimately introduce, we should forego great advantages which are confessedly within our reach. The probability of effecting considerable improvements is not denied; it is, on the contrary, supposed; and this supposition constitutes the very ground of resistance. "Though the field be spacious, and much might be done, attempt not to benefit either "your subjects or yourselves, lest success should, at some very distant day, be abused. "Let us not do moral good, that political evil may not come." Such is the language of the objection; an acquiescence in the propriety of which, since the duty of aiming at those salutary meliorations has been sufficiently established, would imply this further notion: "that the way of duty is not, on the whole, the way of prosperity." It is enough to have pointed out these exceptionable positions.

But another still remains to be mentioned, which goes to the essence of the present subject. The objection silently assumes, "that in a system opposite to the one pro-"posed in this essay, must consist our future safety and stability in India." The high importance of this proposition, not surely one of such intuitive evidence as to command instant assent, entitles it to particular consideration; but that consideration will be more conveniently bestowed, after we have viewed the direct matter of the objection, to which we now proceed.

It alleges then, the probability of the utmost possible success from the adoption of a system of improvement, and the greatest possible abuse of that success. We have no design to exaggerate the effects or events which are necessary to justify these large conjectures; but we apprehend, that upon any reasonable estimate of them, they will be found to form a long series of stages, not only in the advancing, but also in the descending scale of human society; for no partial change in the people, either with respect to opinions or to numbers, seems adequate to the production of them. Let us endeavour therefore, to trace the career which is thus imagined, and to expand to the view, the various gradations of that ample progression by which we are to be conducted through greatness to decline. First, the diffusion of a foreign language, of foreign opinions and arts, of a spirit and religion the most dissimilar to those of the natives, who are a people exceedingly numerous, and from remote antiquity peculiarly attached to their own customs and notions; next a large increase of agriculture, manufactures, commerce; with new wants, tastes, and luxuries; a great demand for English productions and fashions; and a gradual separation from neighbouring nations, in whom these changes, probably misrepresented to them, would beget disgust and aversion to the converted Hindoos. The objection must imply moreover, not only the rise of just notions of civil liberty, but that they have become deeply rooted in a country where despotism seems to have been in all ages, and to be still, the natural and only idea of government*; it must imply vigour and unanimity to assert this liberty; then (before it can be abused) the possession and enjoyment of it; after this, a progress to licentiousness; and lastly, the violent dissolution of their connection with their sole protector, in the midst of nations become hostile to them, without a rational prospect of improving their situation, if they threw themselves upon the support of other European or native powers, or of maintaining independence if they stood alone.

To what distant age, may we not now ask, does this immense process lead us? If we even contract it to any space which an objector could urge as at all commensurate to the assumed consequences, should we still, in reasoning upon such conjectural delineations, stand upon any solid foundation? Would we act in serious and great concerns, even of private, individual import, upon such precarious remote contingencies? Do they not set us afloat upon the ocean of possibilities, where the prospect, extended so far as to become wholly indistinct, confounds sea and sky, and, in interspersed clouds of many shapes, gives fancy easily to discover formidable promontories and rocks?

But if we look to known realities, to some of the many and great obstacles which will stand in the way of any such political revolution as is imagined, we shall be at a loss to give any sober satisfactory account of the manner in which they are to be removed. We insist not on the difficulty of disseminating, only by just and rational means, a new religion, opposed by inveterate habits and prejudices. The friends of that

* The government of the *Seeks*, though it have more of an aristocratic or republican form, seems no real exception to this observation, still less the aristocratic connection of the Mharatta chiefs.

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that scheme, indeed, dare not speak of success, with the confidence which the language of the objection seems to favour; yet they are not without hope; and they are animated by a conviction, that even a partial diffusion of Christianity, would improve the whole mass of society. But if we inquire, for instance, into the probable period of the general abolition of castes, which allowing it ever to happen, must be conceived, in the natural order of things, to precede some other supposed changes, what place shall we assign to it? Some point, we may venture to say, not within our ken; and beyond which, it seems vain to stretch our political solicitude in so changeable a world as this, wherein political prediction is so often baffled; perhaps indeed, because it is so seldom connected with present duty. Supposing, however, the tendency of events to be towards such an abolition, we may conclude, that the progress to it will be gradual. With the institution of castes, are blended, not only religious doctrines and legal privileges, but the whole system of Hindoo manners. Deep rooted prejudices, combined with strong interests and immemorial habits, cannot reasonably be expected to give way to sudden impressions. The entire manners and usages of a people do not change at once. The institution therefore, will not be deprived of its power by any violent rupture or convulsion. And even after the doctrine of castes shall have lost its religious authority, and its tyrannical influence in society, (still arguing on the supposition that these things may happen,) the manners which it contributed to form, will, in a considerable degree, and for a certain time, remain. Among the Malabar converts to Christianity, distinctions of caste have not lost all their force; the habit of separation, the repulsive feelings, the secluding reserves, which spring from that source, though abated, still exist, in some degree perhaps analagous to the ceremonial prejudices of the first Christian Jews. As long as a principle of this nature remains in society, preventive as it will be of an intercommunion in marriages and professions, no formidable political association is likely to arise. Hence as the decline of the institution of castes will be slow and imperceptible, so the moment of its expiration will be unperceived; subsequent observation only will discover that it is past: therefore neither can this change be a signal for new events.

The grand danger with which the objection alarms us is, that the communication of the Gospel and of European light, may probably be introductive of a popular form of government and the assertion of independence. Upon what grounds is it inferred, that these effects must follow in any case, especially in the most unlikely case of the Hindoos? The establishment of Christianity in a country, does not necessarily bring after it a free political constitution. The early Christians made no attempts to change forms of government; the spirit of the Gospel does not encourage even any disposition which might lead to such attempts. Christianity has been long the religion of many parts of Europe, and of various protestant states, where the form of government is not popular. It is its peculiar excellence, and an argument of its intended universality, that it may subsist under different forms of government, and in all render men happy, and even societies flourishing; whereas the Mahomedan and Hindoo systems are built upon the foundation of political despotism, and adapted, in various instances, only to the climates that gave them birth. Christianity seeks moral good, and general happiness. It does not, in the pursuit of these objects, erect a peculiar political system; it views politics through the safe medium of morals, and subjects them to the laws of universal rectitude.

Nor are we to expect, that Christianity is entirely to supersede the effects of physical causes. The debilitating nature of the climate of our Eastern territories, and its unfavourable influence upon the human constitution, have been already mentioned *, and by others represented in strong colours: "Notwithstanding," says the celebrated historian of the British Transactions in Hindostan, "the general effemi-
"nacy of character which is visible in all the Indians throughout the empire, the
"natives of Bengal are still of weaker frame, and more enervated disposition, than
"those of any other province; bodily strength, courage, and fortitude, are unknown;
"even the labour of the common people is totally void of energy; and they are of a
"stupidity, which neither wishes, nor seems to be capable of extending its opera-
"tions into any variety of mechanical dexterity. All those of the better castes, who
"are not fixed to the loom, are bred to the details of traffic and money, in which
"their patience and perseverance are as great as their detestation of danger, and
"aversion

* Chap. III, pp. 39, &c.

"aversion to bodily fatigue*." From this striking description ought to be excepted the military tribes, to whom it will not properly apply; and the general features, we must take the liberty to say, are overcharged: but having made due allowances on these accounts, the picture will certainly possess no faint resemblance of the original.

Indolence, pusillanimity, insensibility, as they proceed not wholly from physical sources, would be at least partially corrected by moral improvement; but the influences of a tropical sun would still be oppressive. The slight structure of the human body, with its ordinary concomitants, still forming the taste to a vegetable diet, would ill second ardent designs, even if the mind were vigorous enough to conceive them. In the early formation of the relations and habits of domestic life, which modify, in no inconsiderable degree, the Hindoo character, there would be no material innovation. The nature of the country adds to the effects of the climate. It is unfavourable for long journies; and the Hindoos, in general a remotely inland people, have a strong aversion to the sea; even the air of it is offensive to them. They are thus deprived of all the advantages which the intercourses of navigation, and an acquaintance with the world at large, would procure to them. Nor is there the least probability, that they will ever become maritime; and as little likely are they to become in other respects, an enterprizing people. More calculated for passive suffering than for arduous attempts, they little love such exertions as freedom demands, and wish rather to be protected, than to have the trouble of protecting themselves.

Where then is the rational ground for apprehending, that such a race will ever become turbulent for English liberty? A spirit of English liberty is not to be caught from a written description of it, by distant and feeble Asiatics especially. It was not originally conceived nor conveyed by a theoretical scheme. It has grown in the succession of ages from the active exertions of the human powers; and perhaps can be relished only by a people thus prepared. Example is more likely to inspire a taste for it than report; but the nations of Europe have seen that liberty and its great effects, without being led to the imitation of it; for the French revolution proceeds not upon its principles; it is an eruption of atheism and anarchy.

The English inhabiting our settlements in India, have no share in the British government there. Some are employed as servants of the Public, but no one possesses any legislative right. Why then should we give to the natives, even if they aspired to it, as it is unlikely that they will thus aspire, what we properly refuse to our own people? The British inhabitants would be extremely averse to such a participation. Our Government, as it is now constituted, interests Europeans in its support, without the danger which colonization might ultimately incur, their views of establishment and of final comfort centering in the mother country.

The conduct of the British American colonies has raised, in some minds, confused surmisings and apprehensions of the possibility of similar proceedings on the part of our Indian provinces. These alarms are easily caught by such persons, as shrink from the idea of whatever might have a remote tendency to advance our Asiatic subjects in the scale of human beings; conceiving, (with what political truth may perhaps hereafter appear,) that the more entirely they continue in their present ignorance, superstition, and degradation, the more secure is our dominion over them†. But never surely were apprehensions more destitute of solid foundation. There

* Part II, page 5th, of the History of Military Transactions, &c. by *Mr. Orme*, an author well entitled to the high rank he holds in public estimation, by his generally just and comprehensive views of the subjects which he treats, the clearness, accuracy, vigour and dignity of his narration; but not appealed to in the former part of this Tract in the account there given of the state of society among the Hindoos, from an idea that he had not any large opportunities of intimately observing the conduct and manners of the middling and lower classes, who live remote from European intercourse.

† From the mischief which has recently been done in this country, by the dissemination of pernicious publications among the lower people, some persons seem inclined to think, that it would be better for the national security and tranquillity, if that that class of the community received no education. As this opinion touches very nearly the main argument which is maintained in the present Tract, the writer, though conscious that neither his ability, nor the limited space of a note, can do justice to the subject, hopes he shall be pardoned in throwing out a few observations upon it.

Springing probably from much better motives than the old exploded maxim, that "ignorance is "the mother of devotion," it nevertheless seems to go upon a principle of a similar kind; it seems to imply, that "ignorance is the surest source of "obedience." But it is presumed, that neither history nor reason will justify such a position, in any sound sense, or indeed in any sense at all, unless a government could be supposed to confine all the knowledge of a country to itself. *Knowledge* has been said, with apparent truth, *to be a species*

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There is, and there ever must be, an essential dissimilarity between the two cases. The Americans were, in fact, Englishmen, (with some infusion of foreign Europeans, which may have contributed to alienate the colonies from this country,) they possessed all the energy of the European character, all the lights of Europe; they were born in a temperate climate, nursed in the largest principles of freedom; nay the seeds of republicanism were sown in the first formation of the leading colonies. They had already

species of power. The *knowing* have power over the *ignorant*; even *the pretence of knowledge*, where *ignorance only* is opposed to it, has a similar advantage; and *knowledge*, like other kinds of power, the more exclusively it is possessed, the more it may be made an instrument of abuse. In the dark ages, when the stock of learning and information was comparatively little, and that little was shared only among a few, the abuses of knowledge and of pretended knowledge, and the ill consequences of those abuses, were greater than they have been in more enlightened times. In our own country, what numerous and gross evils prevailed in society from these causes? Corrupt churchmen and ambitious nobles, (who had the credit of superior intelligence as well as the honour of superior rank,) led the common people within their respective spheres, as they pleased. The common people indeed, had then a spirit of implicit obedience, but it subjected them continually to the impositions of those who assumed the direction of them, and generally to the detriment of the nation at large. Hence the history of this island, prior to the Reformation, exhibits a frequent succession of internal convulsions. That grand event introduced new light; and it was diffused among the lower orders, whose instruction became thenceforth an object of particular care. The consequences were, greater internal order, peace, and stability; thence sprung enlarged industry, adventurous enterprizes, and all the long succession of prosperity which this country has enjoyed.

We have advanced to a high degree of improvement in sciences and arts, in all the conveniences and enjoyments of civil life. Vast commerce has brought vast wealth; and wealth has been followed by its too inseparable attendant, corruption of manners. Our old solid principles, which were the foundation of our greatness, have been gradually falling into disregard and neglect. They might have been well enough in our humbler beginnings, or in a less liberal age; but encreased lights, greater elevation, and a fulness of all means of gratification, have seemed to many to plead first for relaxation, and then for the admissions of other principles allowing a suitable enlargement in indulgencies without fear. This spirit has spread through the whole mass of society. Writings and representations have helped the diffusion of it. Its effects have been visible on morals, and on the happiness of private life. Reverence for religion and for government has decayed. Both have been insidiously attacked from time to time; and at length, as the more mature produce of this spirit, some, disdaining the measured advances hitherto made in unprincipling men, and encouraged by the fatal consummation of a like career in a neighbouring country, have openly and furiously attempted the subversion of all legitimate authority, human and divine. The incendiary torch and the secret mine, have been industriously employed to destroy the venerable fabrics of our religion and our constitution. Seditious and atheistical writings, superlative in the impudence of their falsehood, have been particularly adapted to the vulgar taste; and obviously, because the ignorance of the vulgar exposes them to easier imposition, as the too general example which they had long seen around them, predisposed them to progressive boldness in licentiousness. Then it is, that some men seeing the foundations of our polical existence thus attacked, begin to argue from the abuse of a thing against its use, and to think it would be better for the community, that the lower people should not be instructed even to read, as by such privation they would, it is conceived, be inaccessible to infection from the press.

But in fact, the evils of which we complain, originate in no small degree from the ignorance that has naturally followed the dereliction of right principles. The symptoms indicate a method of cure contrary to that which is proposed. The habit is diseased; the disorder, too deep to be reached externally, requires that the application be directed to its source. A return to ignorance may hasten the destruction of a society become corrupt through refinement, but can hardly contribute to restore it to soundness. At our advanced stage of improvement, it must be vain to imagine, that any retrograde movement we could effect in knowledge, would avail to secure the common mind from agitations and commotions. If any scheme of that kind even succeeded so far as to confine knowledge again among a smaller number, it could not reach to such characters as are now zealous to loosen and root out all received opinions in religion and government; but they would, on the contrary, be able to do more mischief than they effect now, because the *more* profound were the ignorance of the multitude, the more scope would there be, as in the dark ages, for the arts and activity of wicked men to work upon their credulity. Of this France has furnished a recent instance, too memorable to be ever forgotten. The want of knowledge and principle among the lower classes, left them a prey to Jacobinical impostures and delusions, by which they were hurried at once into the atrocities of anarchy and atheism.

It is not then by exposing our common people, unarmed and defenceless, to the daring blasphemies and sophistries of the preachers of impiety and sedition, that we can hope to keep them quiet. Our security lies, and lies only, in diffusing good instruction and right principles among them. In this too, the French revolutionists have afforded a lesson, which may suggest something useful to us. They endeavour that the minds of the people may not remain in that unfurnished state, of which they made advantage; but that the young especially, may be imbued with the tenets and prejudices favourable to their cause.

It is perhaps a mistake to suppose, that the common people among us, who have been most prone to tumult and disorder, are such as can read and write, or that the tendencies to commotion which have appeared, are to be ascribed to any degree of education possest by that class. Besides that one reader in a circle or in a village would be sufficient to disseminate what was level to the vulgar understanding and acceptable to vulgar prejudices, and that the lower ranks are more affected by what they see or hear, than by what they read; those tendencies have chiefly manifested themselves in large towns, abounding with manufacturers, or idle vagabonds destitute of character or qualities sufficient to procure an honest livelihood, and it is therefore fair to presume, the least instructed part of the community. The manufacturers, generally put to work when yet children,

already a popular government. They were inured to arms, to hardships, and toils. The spirit of improvement animated them in a thousand different lines. They were expert seamen; their country abounded in excellent harbours; and in their geographical situation, they were (with the exception of one or two of our detached, more recently settled colonies) the sole civilized people in a great tract of continent, which seemed to offer to them the tempting prospect of becoming there the only political power. With all this, they were near enough to our insidious enemies to be constantly instigated to resistance by their arts, and effectually aided by their arms and resources. To what one of these many particulars, shall we discover a parallel among our Hindoo subjects? To none, as they now are; and in various important points, no resemblance is ever to be expected. The origin, the physical character and

dren, often receive no education. When grown up, they are, not unfrequently congregated in large numbers, sometimes without due attention to decorum; they encourage each other in vice; and the gains of their labour enable them to pass the time of relaxation, in which they commonly include what ought to be allowed to sacred purposes, in dissolute indulgence. Among people of this character, there is combustible matter already prepared for the designs of these who seek to kindle discontent and disturbance. But the writer of these observations had occasion, not long ago, to see a contrast to this description, in a populous country parish. In that district there were very few persons of sufficient age, who could not read. The people were in general sober, decent, regular in their attendance on public worship; and in the course of twenty preceding years, one instance of the commission of a capital crime among them had not occurred. The doctrines of Paine found little to work upon in such a community; the Bible was reverenced there, and every man kept steadily within his own place.

But we are not left in this case to smaller instances of individual observation. An experiment has been going on upon a large scale for a long series of years, in the sight of the whole nation, in the two countries of Ireland and Scotland. The common classes of the former country have unhappily been too generally kept in ignorance to the present day; and are not the consequences most obvious and most serious? How lamentably are the lower people there distinguished by vicious, turbulent, and lawless proceedings? In what division of the British dominions has there appeared so great a propensity to embrace democratic, disorganizing principles? And it is observable, that these principles, and the barbarities of which we hear so much, have prevailed chiefly in remoter, less enlightened parts of the kingdom, whilst the vicinities of Dublin, Cork and other considerable places more civilized by knowledge, have been more orderly and quiet. Scotland, on the contrary, has been remarkable for attention to the instruction of the lower classes of its inhabitants, and they have, in general, been distinguished for near two centuries past by a spirit of sobriety and order. In the more remote inaccessible parts of that country, whither, obstructed by particular causes, light penetrated more slowly, regularity and good order were also of later establishment; but the natives of those divisions, misguided into excess on some occasions now long past, have since been as eminent for a quiet and peaceable demeanour at home, as for standing numerously in the foremost ranks of those who have bled for the interests and the honour of this country in every quarter of the globe; and at the present critical juncture have come conspicuously forward, in many bands, for the support of our constitution and our religion, against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Indeed, if we were even to set aside the consideration of religion, and the good principles it inculcates, and to regard knowledge merely as power, or as an instrument of civilization, we might safely rest the present question upon this ground. The diffusion of knowledge would, in the end, render a nation more disposed to check the admission of disorganizing principles. Doctrines it is admitted, while new, might make, as they often do, an irregular impression; but at length these irregularities would be corrected by good sense and reflection; and surely literature, even in its lowest stages, must be allowed to be more favourable to the production of good sense and reflection than ignorance.

But when we take into the question the influence of religion and all its salutary principles, certainly no one who considers their force and tendency can hesitate how to decide. Christianity was given to be a "*a light to the world*;" ignorance is declared in the inspired writings to be one of the leading causes of the ruin of the Jewish nation, and of the vices of the Heathens. The ancient Pharisees were condemned by the Author of our religion for taking away the key of knowledge, that is, the use of the Scriptures from the people; which also has been eminently the sin of the Romish Church. It is, on the contrary, a stated prayer of the Church of England, that the people may so *read* the word of God as duly to profit by it; and as that word "*thoroughly furnishes*" those who submit to it "*for all good works*," so where else shall we find such pointed authoritative precepts for the due regulation, order, and peace of society? "*Put the people in mind to be subject to principali-*
"*ties and powers, and to obey magistrates, not only*
"*for fear of human punishment, but for conscience*
"*sake; to submit to every ordinance of man for*
"*the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as su-*
"*preme, or to governors as sent by him, for so*
"*is the will of God. Prayers, are to be made for*
"*Kings and all in authority, that we may lead a*
"*quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and ho-*
"*nesty.* Christians are commanded *to study*
"*to be quiet and to mind their own business, to*
"*fear God and the King, and not to meddle with*
"*those who are given to change.*"

Those therefore, who would, by with-holding the knowledge of letters from the vulgar, abridge the use of the Scriptures, would in fact aid the views of such as wish to overthrow our Christian faith and our civil establishment. If there be any who misuse the doctrines of the Gospel, by teaching a wild and shallow religion, which may indeed too easily connect with political error and disorder, the remedy must assuredly be, in this or in any similar case, not to leave the field entirely to mistaken guides, but more strenuously to oppose error by truth; and if the same zeal, the same *personal interest*, with which the emissaries of sedition have laboured, were universally employed on the other side, rationally and solidly to inculcate right principles and wholesome instructions, we might comfortably hope, that the attempts of domestic and foreign enemies to excite internal troubles among us would end in their disappointment and disgrace.

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and condition, the intellectual, moral, and political state of the Hindoos, have already appeared, in the course of this essay, to be totally different. On their local circumstances only, it remains to say, in addition to what was before intimated, a few words. If they were ever "to exalt the spear of enmity" against their ancient masters, they would do so almost environed by Hindoos, whose faith they had renounced, and to whom their apostacy would have rendered them odious. Could they trust such neighbours as allies, or resist them as enemies? What their interest would obviously require them to avoid, surely we have no right to assume that they would be so unwise as to commit. And if they called in the assistance of an European power, would they thus obtain independence, or only change one master for another? On all the coast of Hindostan there are but three or four good ports, and these at great distances from each other; though the shore is in many places accessible to an invading force, and there are some tolerable harbours in the islands of the Bay of Bengal, of which an enemy could take great advantage. Now if the Hindoos could be renovated in every other particular, no assignable period can be imagined for their acquiring and practising the art of navigation; and therefore those of them now subject to Great Britain must, in their supposed new circumstances, not only continue to need the supply of many wants from that country, but always be exposed to the hostile approaches of the navies of Europe. By a people so circumstanced, it does not appear how independence is attainable. They must, in effect, be at the mercy of the strongest maritime power. Whilst therefore, we continue to be that power, it is rather to be expected that their own interest, and the preference which their imitation of our manners will have given us over other European nations, will jointly induce them to remain safe under our protection; as these motives, on their part, will strengthen us in India against European invaders, and so contribute to maintain our naval superiority at home; which superiority, in the present state of our Hindoo subjects, is still more necessary for the preservation of our Eastern possessions, than it would be on the supposed approximation of that people to the British character.

. It may now be fair to enquire into the propriety with which that species of doubt or apprehension, which has just been considered, insinuates, as it does, some moral relation between the American revolution, and such principles as are proposed to be introduced among our Indian subjects. Is it to be supposed, that if the Americans, being in their physical character, their local and political circumstances, the same, had professed Mahomedanism, or any pagan religion, they would not have been at least, equally prone to a revolution? If we had maintained in America, the same kind of despotic government which has prevailed in the East, where the sovereign, when dispatching a viceroy to a distant province, could seldom know that he should not soon have to send an army to reduce him to obedience, will it be asserted that our authority would have been better or equally secured? But after all that is said of the separation of the American colonies from Great Britain, it is now a fact well known, that it did not spring from the general disposition, or the previous design of the people: in the possession of all the advantages, which have been enumerated, they had not become impatient for independence; and among the reasons to be assigned for the attachment which then still remained among them for this country, may certainly be reckoned their possession of the same language and religion.

If it be urged, that a comparison between the American colonists, and the natives of our Eastern territories, can be justly instituted only in considering the latter, not as they are at present, but as they would be after all the proposed improvements were diffused among them, it may be answered, that our previous statement of the effects of these improvements, affords matter for this comparison, so far as things contingent and unknown, can be compared with things established and known; and that it is fair, for a double reason, to state the present disparity between the two races of people, first to shew the immense career which the Hindoos have yet to run, even in the prosecution of such improvements as are attainable, and secondly to demonstrate, that in the character, situation, and circumstances of the Americans, at the æra of their revolution, there were radical important distinctions, which no improvement, on the part of the Hindoos, could annihilate; or in other words, that they could never be expected to arrive at the point at which the Americans then stood.

Indeed those who know the country of Hindostan will probably think that political liberty is the last thing likely to flourish there. Though that country has been, from causes

causes of a different nature which will be hereafter noticed, always subject to revolutions and convulsions; a revolution, the idea and act of the popular mind, upon the principles, or rather from an abuse of the principles of civil liberty, would be as great a political phenomenon as the world has exhibited, and one of which Asia has given no example. To bring a timid submissive people, whom the Tartars called "*worshippers of power*," up to the manliness of the European character, to elevate the feeblest of them, the Bengaleze, to so high a point of energy, that like the American descendants of the British themselves, they should plan the daring project of an independent empire, seems to be something beyond what has yet been seen, or is reasonably to be expected from the effects of institutions, civil or religious, upon nations.

Having thus considered the adverse consequences held forth by the objection, it may now be proper to notice more particularly, the favourable suppositions which it contains. The dangers it fears, are the dangers of prosperity. If then, this prosperity were realized, and the produce, the manufactures, and the riches of the country were greatly encreased, as according to the objection, English manners, tastes and wants, must also have become common, would not exports thither, and the reciprocal commerce arising from the change (not to reckon the imposts which merchandize, now hardly taxed at all, would then easily bear) be proportionably augmented? For what series of years, and with what multiplying powers, may we then conceive this augmentation to be progressive? Large as the assertion may seem, perhaps the shortest term we could assign to it would produce an accumulation of commercial profits and advantages, more than tantamount to a very high valuation of the fee simple of our provinces, if we could suppose a sale of them to be now made. And it is fair also to admit, that if the country were finally lost, our commerce might still be necessary to it, and possibly even continue to encrease. Such then would be the conclusion afforded by this formidable objection; if for the sake of argument, we were to allow the process described in it, to go on without resistance to its exceptionable parts. But we trust, we have already shewn, that it is not entitled to this concession, and that whilst it holds forth evils, only as distant and hypothetical, it is obliged, as the sole ground of its apprehension, to admit advantages to be certain and proximate.

It remains now to examine one important position, already mentioned to be tacitly contained in the objection, "that in a system, opposite to the one here proposed, must consist our future safety and stability in India." Unwilling as the writer is, to enter on so delicate a subject, and indeed inadequate to the due treatment of it, he feels himself called by his argument, to make some circumspect observations upon it. Certainly in a political view, the great question which this country has to determine respecting India is, "What are the best means of perpetuating our empire there*?" Not, what set of measures or line of policy may suit with the aspects of the day, or keep up the motion of the machine of government; but upon what general principles may we best hope to make our connection with that country permanent, and, as far as we can, indissoluble? Towards the determination of this question, perhaps it will be well to revert to the past history of our Indian provinces (or let us say to those of Bengal in particular, the chief seat of our dominion) and to the character of the natives of them. The English, it is true, were at first guided in their eastern administration, rather by nascent events, than by abstract principles or recorded experience; but however natural this may be, in the progress to establishment, a more extended survey of the course of past affairs in the acquired country, with their causes and consequences, may well befit the new possessors, when firmly settled in their power. It is not perhaps enough to exempt them from this review, that they follow a system of government widely different from the system of their predecessors, and are themselves a very different people. Among their Asiatic subjects, certain general properties which belong to human nature, and certain peculiar qualities resulting from a peculiar composition of society, may be expected to have a steady operation, where not controlled by stronger influences. If we look back then to the history of Bengal for five centuries, we

* Some will be ready to answer, "By securing to the people their religion and laws;" and in the just sense of the words, namely, that no violent change in either, contrary to the sense of the people, is to be enforced, we agree to the proposition. But what if the religion should be less favourable to our dominion than another system, and the people were induced voluntarily to make that other their religion; would not the change be for our interest?

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we shall find, that except in the period when the Mogul empire was in its vigour, and the component parts of it thereby kept in peace with each other, that country has been the scene of frequent revolutions; and we cannot fail to discover, that as the despotism of eastern government may be reckoned the first and remote principle of such changes, so they have immediately proceeded from two causes, the lawless spirit of ambitious adventure common among all the military tribes of Hindostan, and the nature of the general mass of the people inhabiting that region.

The Persians and Tartars, who have poured into it from early ages, have generally been soldiers of fortune, who brought little with them but their swords. With these they have not unfrequently carved their way to dignity and empire. Power has been, and is their darling object; nothing was scrupled by them to obtain it; the history of Mahomedan rule in Hindostan is full of treasons, assassinations, fratricides, even parricide is not unknown to it. These northern adventurers by their spirit and pursuits, became in fact an accession, of more active and stronger qualities indeed, to the military division of the people of Hindostan. The Hindoos, though held to be less prone to the shedding of blood, have not however, carried their nicety far, when the prize of sovereignty or authority has been in question; but among them, sanguinary ambition has been usually confined to the Brahmins and the military caste; to the latter more.

The military class of the Hindoos, which in its institution has some of the features of a militia, forms in reality a great standing army of mercenaries, ready to be hired on all occasions, though usually not obliged to enter into actual service. Thus the sovereign of a country cannot always command their assistance, whilst the existence of such a body may often render a domestic competitor, or a foreign enemy, formidable to him. From this copious source, any man of enterprise, whatever were his views or pretensions, could always find partisans, if he had funds to entertain them; the treasure of the prince has been often used by his servants, to hire men to despoil him also of his throne. No character has been so bad, no cause so unjust, as not to find an army to support it if there were money to pay them. The members of the military caste, conceiving themselves destined by their creation to fight, often take up arms with the same indifference and indiscrimination as a labourer takes up a spade; insomuch that it has not been unusual to see a defeated army join the standard of the victor, upon the same principle which carries the labourer from one employer, with whom business runs low, to another whose service and means he deems more sure. The military Mahomedans (for many of the descendants of the Tartars who settled in Hindostan fell into the lines of civil life) are equally ready as the military Hindoos to engage themselves in commotions, quarrels, and any species of warfare, both having always, in times of confusion, an eye to plunder.

From this institution of a military class, the wisdom of which is surely impeached by the general effects it has produced, the military spirit came at length to reside almost wholly in one portion of the people. And hence may, in part at least, have followed the abjectness of the inferior tribes, composing the main body of the nation, and their want of public spirit. However much they may, on different accounts, have preferred a Hindoo to a Mahomedan government, no instance is recollected of their rising to support any native prince, or keep out any invader. The whole history of the Mahomedan empires in Hindostan, as well as the traces we have of the anterior government of the Hindoos, and what we see in modern days, all concur to prove the slavish disposition of that people, and their want of attachment to their rulers.

From these several causes, the despotic genius of Eastern government, the exclusive hereditary allotment of the military profession to one class, and the abject character of the people, have proceeded the great encouragement of individuals to the violent assumption of power, and the frequency of insurrections, convulsions, and revolutions in that country. And the same causes, though their operation may, by various circumstances, be occasionally suspended, will as long as they exist, have a tendency to produce the same effects. Hindostan has alternately been united under one great head, or partitioned into many states. New conquerors have, in different ages, appeared on that continent, who encreasing as they went on, have at length, by the vast number of their followers, overwhelmed every thing that opposed them. We now, indeed, see the empire of the Moguls prostrate, and may be apt to think, that arranged as the politics and powers of Hindostan are, the same order of

things

things is not likely to return; but it was upon the subversion of the Patan empire that the Moguls rose; and may not a new adventurer, and a new horde from Tartary, establish yet another dynasty? It was perfectly in the option of Nadir Shaw, when he entered Delhi as a conqueror, in 1739, to have done this*. And if one of those scourges of mankind who have so frequently desolated India, should again arise, sending his fame, and the idea of his "happy destiny" before him, might not the multitudes collected in his progress, poured out at length into the remote quarter of Bengal, endanger our existence there? Whether we suppose him to advance in the first flush of conquest, or after he had given a central consolidation to his power, he would be backed by the resources of a vast inland region, by large armies of horse, and myriads of infantry. If we now figure to ourselves the progress of his operations, it will not bring them nearer; it will be in order that we may be better guarded against them. The Tartars, unaccustomed to cope with our steady military galantry and skill, might be repeatedly repulsed. Still fresh swarms of assailants might be brought forward, and season after season, invasion be renewed. We could bring few cavalry into the field; the numerous squadrons of the enemy might waste and exhaust the country; the landholders, from whom the revenues are derived, would, as is usual in Hindostan, upon the appearance of commotion, withhold the payment of their rents; the produce of the districts which the enemy might occupy, they would immediately appropriate; and the credit of our government, as indeed we even now experience in times of exigency, would not procure us any adequate supplies. We should thus be straitened and embarrassed in our resources; suspicions of our stabilit might arise in the minds of our subjects, and among them would be a great numbe of the military caste, unemployed by us, and ready to make their own use of any pro mising occasion. Many of those subjects, won by the splendor of new power, and th proud display of an imperial standard, or desirous of securing an early interest, perha indulging new hopes from a revolution, would fall away from us: others would wis for a cessation of predatory vexations, at the expence of our expulsion. The Seapoy whose attachment to us has appeared surprising, though the causes of it seem neithe inexplicable nor immutable,† supplied tardily, and perhaps only partially with th pay, of which the regular advance had before so conciliated them to our service; an instead of being animated by the career of victory, cooped up in a dubious defensiv warfare, might also be tempted to listen to the large offers of a dazzling leader, i whom their ready notions of fatalism might easily present to them a new *king of th world*. In such an arduous crisis, we trust that every thing to be expected fro bravery, fortitude, and military science, would be performed on our part; but mu not our lasting dependence be chiefly on British troops, on our maritime power, an on supplies by sea? With all these, it is very easy to see how oppressive, ho threatening a long struggle, maintained under such circumstances, possibly by aic derived from the mother country, must be to us; how much also it must shake o interests and our stability in the rest of India. Now in any such state of things, i any case of the same nature, less extreme, what would be of more importance to u what could so effectually fortify our cause, as to have the people of our territorie sincerely attached to our government; to have established in their minds such a affectionate participation in our lot, such an union with our interests, as shoul counteract the defection, defalcations, and treachery, to be otherwise apprehende from the ordinary bent and practice of the Asiatic character? We should thus hav the service of all the resources which our rich provinces contained, we should hav the steady adherence and co-operation of the people, and in this way, might certainl confound and baffle even the powerful preparations of an imperial despot, to whos affairs long and spirited resistance might prove highly detrimental, by encouragi distant provinces which he had before over-run, to throw off the yoke. And ho are our subjects to be formed to a disposition thus favourable to us, to be change thus in their character, but by new principles, sentiments, and tastes, leading to ne views, conduct, and manners; all which would, by one and the same effect, identif their cause with ours, and proportionably separate them from opposite interests It is not, we may venture to affirm, from such a change, but in continuing as w are, that we stand most exposed to the dangers of political revolution. The objectio which conceives remote evils to result from a plan of improvement, does not adve to others which may, in the mean time, arise from causes of a different kind. W join with it in the desire of securing in permanence, the fair possession this countr

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* If he had, we might probably have still been mere merchants in India.

† See note to page 31.

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has obtained (more, it may be concluded, by the overruling dispensation of Providence, than by any scheme of man,) but differ as to the means. *To us it appears*, that nothing promises so fair for the end proposed, as engaging the attachment and regard of the people, and removing those causes which have hitherto made them so acquiescent in every change. It was this passive temper, joined to the expectations which many might entertain from the deposition of the reigning Nabob, that contributed to our easy acquisition of the country; but the same temper would render our hold of it less sure in any arduous contest. At present, we are every way different from the people whom we hold in subjection; different in country, in language, in manners, in customs, in sentiments, and in religion; their interest also, for the reasons mentioned in the early part of this memoir, they must conceive to be different from ours. What then can be a healing principle with regard to all these points, but a principle of *assimilation*, a *common-bond*, which shall give to both parties the reality and the conviction of mutual benefit from the connection? Without an uniting principle, a conjoining tie of this nature, we can suppose the country to be, in fact, retained only by mere power; but in the same degree that an identity of sentiments and principles would be established, we should exhibit a sight new in the region of Hindostan, a people actively attached, cordially affected to their government, and thus augmenting its strength. In this laudable way, we should become more formidable to the other powers of that continent, we should be best secured against foreign enemies, insurrections, and the dangers of an hereditary military body; we should have more support from the mass of the people, and in a word, be most effectually guarded against a revolution.

It is remarkable, that the radical principle of the conclusion thus made, a conclusion to which an acquaintance with the Indian character, and the experience that progressive time has afforded of the effects of knowledge, particularly the divine knowledge of Christianity, may now easily lead an ordinary mind, directed, according to the judicious historian of *The ancient European Intercourse with India*, the policy of the Grecian conqueror of that country, in securing his Eastern acquisitions. However different, in other respects, the circumstances of that celebreted personage may be from ours, in this we agree with him, that we have an Asiatic empire to maintain. And Dr. Robertson, who in acknowledging the eccentricities of that extraordinary man, gives him also the credit of profound political views, observes, " he early perceived, *that to render his authority secure and permanent, it* " *must be established in the affection of the nations he had subdued, and maintained* " *by their arms*; and that in order to acquire this advantage, all distinctions between " the victors and the vanquished must be abolished, and his European and Asiatic " subjects be incorporated and become one people, *by obeying the same laws, and by* " *adopting the same manners, institutions, and discipline.*" It is the leading idea only of this policy, that is meant to be applied here; and that leading idea is plainly the principle of *assimilation.* It would neither suit us, nor our subjects, to act upon it universally, as Alexander proposed. We ought not to wish, that the distinctions between the two races should be lost, or to aim at introducing into Asia laws framed for this country; but to attach our subjects by affection, by interest, by winning them to our religion and our sentiments,—this would be at once to add to their happiness, and to arrive at the same object which the great conqueror had in view, that of rendering our authority " permanent and secure."

This policy is recommended by some other considerations, which shall be briefly noticed. It is sufficiently understood, that since our first appearance on the theatre of Indian war and politics, the native powers have improved in military discipline, and that we now find it necessary to bring into the field, armies proportionably larger than those that served to achieve our early victories. Having so interesting an evidence of the capability of the natives to improve, there appears no good reason to conclude, that their advancement in military skill may not be further progressive. It is extremely probable, that the beneficial effects of our civil policy will also in time force themselves upon their attention, and from the cogent motive of self-interest, produce at least some imitations. All the advances they make in the arts of war or of peace, will serve to lessen that superiority in both, by which, under the disadvantages attaching to us as foreigners, and with forces comparatively small, we have acquired an ascendancy among the powers of Hindostan. The nearer we approach to an equality, the more these disadvantages will be felt. Our business seems to be therefore, by new resources in policy, still to preserve the relative rank in which we have hitherto stood; and what can more directly conduce to this end, than to infuse new principles

CHAP. IV.
Inquiry into Measures for improving the Condition of our Asiatic Subjects; and Answers to Objections.

principles of attachment, of activity, and industry, among the people we govern, thus strengthening their character, and deriving additional support from them?

The European nations have an undisputed possession of the Indian seas, and are now so much connected with the continent of India, that every material change which takes place in them, may be expected, in some shape or other, to extend its influence thither. It cannot be irrational, therefore, to suppose, that the astonishing events which have lately convulsed Europe, and are likely to produce consequences durable and momentous, may have their bearings upon our Asiatic interests. That exorbitant ambitious power which seeks our destruction, may aim, by different channels and instruments, to excite troubles and disorders in our possessions, or to embroil us with our Indian neighbours. The Cape of Good Hope, the head of a vast country, in a fine climate, and singular in the felicity of its position for a great emporium, whether it remain with us or fall under French influence, will probably, by a change already begun in its internal policy, swarm, at no distant period, with a numerous race, of European character and descent, planted at the entrance into the Indian seas, and within two months sail of the Indian coasts. Another great colony of the same race, in a climate equally favourable to the human constitution, is springing up on the eastern side of the Indian Ocean. The appearance of many adventurers of these descriptions on the shores of Hindostan, as one day they may be expected to appear, (a day perhaps nearer than it is possible to bring other apprehended improvements,) can hardly fail to have some effect upon the political affairs of that country, those of the native princes as well as our own. In all these, or any other supposable cases then, the more closely we bind the people under our rule to ourselves, the more firmly shall we be prepared, in that quarter, against adverse events and combinations.

It may be urged by some, in opposition to the systematical improvement here proposed, that the influence of the British government and character, especially where the intermixture of Europeans is large, will of itself gradually produce a change in the sentiments of our Eastern subjects. Let this position be, to a certain degree, admitted; it is one interesting enough to merit some attention. The English, in their obscure commercial state, were little known or regarded by the people whom they now govern. Their elevation to power, brought into public display all the particulars of their character, with their manners and customs. These, in various instances, at first shocked the prejudices of the Hindoos, who thought, with a kind of horror, of the new masters to whom they bowed. But by degrees they perceived, that usages the most repugnant to their ideas, were free of that turpitude which they had associated with them. They found these foreigners superior to them in general powers and knowledge, in personal honour and humanity; and at length saw the British government assume a character of equity and patriotism, unknown in their preceding administrations. These qualities, it shall be granted, have a tendency to conciliate in some measure, the natives *who are near enough to observe them.* Among those who live in our settlements, or are much connected with Europeans, long habits of intercourse have softened down repugnancies, or blunted the sensations which our manners at first inspired; and there is in such, an apparent, perhaps a real abatement of jealousy and solicitude respecting their own notions and punctilios. But in all these varying aspects of the European character, something essential to those disposed to fall into an imitation of it has been absent. Men that meet together in this country for the purposes of business, seldom enter into communication respecting the foundations of their faith and practice; any serious discussion of this nature, occurs still more rarely there. The indifference for religion, which Mr. Hume ascribes to the English in general of the present age,—(he calls it profound indifference,)—may there pass for liberal toleration, or complaisant forbearance towards inferiors of another faith. Discovering in their intercourses with us little of the nature of the religion we profess, they will not, of course be apt to refer the good qualities of which the English appear possessed, to that source; nor will they know, that the national standard of morals formed from it, has an influence, even upon the conduct of those who pay no particular regard to a religious system. If then any of the Hindoos should, in time, feel some tendency to imitate that freedom in manners, sentiments, and intercourses, that latitude as to religious opinions and observances, which they see in their European masters, what would be the consequence but evidently this, that they would be loosened from their own religious prejudices, not by the previous reception of another system in their stead, but by becoming indifferent to every system. For a transition from one error to another is, it must be acknowledged,

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more readily made, than a transition from error to truth. Error is more easily imbibed, more hardly eradicated; truth more slowly received, more easily resigned. And in this way it is, that if we conceive the anarchial principles which have burst forth in Europe ever to spread to India, they will be most likely to have their entrance. Indeed so wonderfully contagious do they appear to be, so congenial to the worst qualities of human nature, that it may be difficult to point out a place where they can find nothing to fasten upon. Societies in which much corruption and much superstition prevail, seem in general more liable to them, than those in which true religion and morals are still strongly rooted. The French, it will readily be allowed, fell into them more readily than they would have embraced any scheme of personal reformation, or a more pure and strictly practical religious system. The abuses of civil and religious institutions lead to them, and furnish the most plausible pretences for them. False principles, and the fooleries of a false religion, even when used to support things good in themselves, as government and subordination, would ill stand before such arts and abilities as have lately assailed the truth. Truth only is invincible. To teach it therefore, is to take the surest means of excluding the infection of licentious disorganizing sophistries. A change from false religion to the true, is a movement from an exposed place to a strong fortress; and every advance made in the system of moral and religious instruction here recommended, so far from opening the way to those loose latitudinarian notions which tend to a rejection of all authority, would establish rights, human and divine, upon their proper basis, and bind the conscience to the observance of them.

To these considerations, which on the whole may certainly be deemed not unworthy of attention, two other reflections may serve to give additional weight. First,—It is to be feared, that the number of lower Europeans will go on to encrease in our territories; they mix most with the natives, and by them the worst parts of our manners will be exhibited. Secondly,—By the security which we have with great wisdom given to the land tenures of Bengal, the value of property there, and the consideration arising from the possession of it, will naturally be enhanced, so that in process of time, the owners of large estates, hitherto little productive to them, may become of consequence by their wealth and possessions. We know also, that encreasing prosperity tends to strengthen pride and disorderly propensities. Here again, therefore, we find motives for the introduction of our principles; for if some at least, both of the higher and lower orders, may be led, by European manners, to adopt new ideas of relaxation, at the same time that new powers are put into the hands of the former, we ought, in good policy and reason, to communicate to them a system which, divested of all burthensome unnecessary ceremonies, and all superstitious folly, is yet calculated to produce a purer and higher influence than their own, upon the general moral conduct, and all the relative duties of life. As then we have already been gradually led, by good sense and expediency, to introduce regulations derived from our national ideas and principles, into the government and management of our possessions, their advantage and our safety may dispose us also to wish, that our religion and moral principles might obtain a fair establishment there; for if we can suppose, that through the encreasing relations between Europe and India, the common lights and manners of Europeans adventuring thither should ever make a strong impression, unaccompanied by the knowledge of those principles, which do not propagate themselves spontaneously, and are not to be implanted without culture and care, that change might not be favourable to our interests; since the present circumstances of Europe seem emphatically to point out, that nothing but such principles can be depended upon, for keeping subjects in obedience and subordination *.

In

* These several objections, and the answers to them, excepting the sixth and seventh, were, as to their substance and scope, committed to writing in the latter end of the year 1792, though not then in any shape brought into notice. In April 1793, a discussion took place in a general Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock, in which almost all the same objections were advanced, by persons with whom the writer never had any communication on such subjects. This was on occasion of two resolutions which the House of Commons, very honourably for itself, had voted in the view of introducing the purport of them into the Act of Parliament then about to be passed, for renewing the charter of the East-India Company. The resolutions were these:

"RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this "House, that it is the peculiar and bounden "duty of the legislature, to promote, by *all just* "and *prudent means*, the interests and happiness "of the inhabitants of the British dominions in "India; and that for these ends, such measures "ought to be adopted, as may *gradually* tend to "their advancement in *useful knowledge*, and to "*their religious and moral improvement*.

"RESOLVED, That sufficient means of religious "worship and instruction be provided for all "persons of the Protestant communion in the "service,

In coming, as we now do, to the close of the answer to the last and most material of the objections which are foreseen against the proposed scheme, that objection which questions the expediency of using the English language, it will be proper to call to recollection what was stated in the first opening of it,—that the *principle* of communicating our light and knowledge, and the *channel* or *mode* of communication, were two distinct things; that the admission of the former did not depend on the choice

" service, or under the protection of the East " India Company in Asia, proper ministers being " from time to time sent out from Great Britain " for those purposes; and that a chaplain be " maintained on board every ship of 500 tons " burthen, and upwards, in the East-India Com- " pany's employ; and that moreover, no such " ministers or chaplains shall be sent out, or " appointed, until they first shall have been ap- " proved of, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, " or the Bishop of London, for the time being."

Several Proprietors of East India Stock made a violent attack upon these resolutions, and the following is an abstract of all the arguments or objections urged against them, as they are reported by Mr. Woodfall. It is with reluctance that any reference is made here to the opinions then given, because they stand connected with particular names; and it is far from being the wish of the writer, to introduce any thing that may seem to have even a remote tendency to personality; but as opinions delivered in a public assembly, and afterwards made more public by the press, are fairly open to animadversion, so justice to the present subject, renders some notice of those now in question, indispensable.

OBJECTIONS STATED GENERALLY. " That " sending missionaries into our Eastern territories, " is the most wild, extravagant, expensive, un- " justifiable project, that ever was suggested by " the most visionary speculator. That the prin- " ciple is obnoxious, impolitic, unnecessary, full " of mischief, dangerous, useless, unlimited."

SPECIFIC ARGUMENTS, *First Class.* " The plan " would be dangerous and impolitic; it would " affect the peace and ultimate security of our " possessions. It tends to endanger and injure " our affairs there most fatally, it would either " produce disturbances, or bring the Christian " religion into contempt. Holding one faith or " religion, is the most strong common cause with " mankind, and the moment that took place in " India there would be an end of British su- " premacy.

" That the principle of proselyting was *im- " politic*, and was, or ought to be exploded, in so " enlightened a period as the eighteenth century."

" That it would be a most serious and fatal " disaster, if natives of character*, even a hun- " dred thousand of them, were converted to " Christianity.

" That the establishment of seminaries and " colleges in America, was one of the most " efficient causes of the loss of that country.

" That suffering young clergymen, (who are " usually of pleasurable habits,) to over-run the in- " terior of India, would be dangerous, and prove ul- " timately destructive to the Company's interest."

Second Class. " The scheme would be un- " successful. It is extravagant to hope for the " conversion of the natives. They are invincibly " attached to their own castes; their prejudices, " manners, and habits, are all against a change."

" It is vain to attempt to overcome pre- " judices fixed by the practice of ages, far ex- " ceeding the time in which Britons had any idea " of religion at all. The attempt is, in these " views, idle, absurd, and impracticable."

" Only the dregs of the people can be con- " verted; they will pretend conversion, and dis- " grace Christianity.

" The higher, and more respectable natives, are " people of the purest morality, and strictest " virtue, (this was said only by one speaker, who " knew little of India.)

" The services of religion are devoutly per- " formed in the Company's settlements and ships, " either by clergymen or laymen, and their eccle- " siastical establishments are sufficient."

Third Class. " The *scheme would be expen- " sive.* The expence would be enormous, into- " lerable; one, two, or three hundred thousand " pounds."

Fourth Class. " The scheme would be un- " limited, in respect of the numbers and qualifi- " cations of the missionaries."

All these objections will be found already answered in the text. A few brief remarks upon them may however be proper, and will be sufficient here.

1st. The objections urged in general terms, are merely declamatory. They are accompanied by no reasonings or elucidations. But *the principle* which they censure as the most wild, extravagant, unjustifiable, mischievous, dangerous, useless, impolitic, that ever was suggested by the most visionary

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* It will be remembered, that these are chiefly *Idolaters*, something of whose character and worship we have already seen. With whatever indifference idolatry may be viewed, and however venial it may be accounted in these times, even by persons born in Christian countries, it is a crime against which the displeasure of the holy and true God, the sovereign and unerring judge of the qualities of actions, is expressed, with peculiar indignation, contempt, and abhorrence, throughout that revelation which he hath vouchsafed to us; and it is therein shewn to have often brought on, by its nature and effects, the misery and ruin of individuals and of nations.

Even the wiser men of ancient Pagan Europe, between the superstition of which, and the idolatry of the Hindoos, an identity has been proved, (by Sir William Jones, in the Asiatic Transactions, Vol. I.) saw and complained of the evils of their popular system of religion. Cicero brings in an Epicurean philosopher, arraigning that system in severe terms: " The most absurd things, observes he, are said by " the poets, things which are noxious even by the agreeable " style in which they are conveyed; for they have intro- " duced gods mad with anger, inflamed with lust, and have " presented to our view their wars, battles, fightings, " wounds; their hatred, differences, strivings; their births, " deaths, " deaths, complaints, lamentations; their lusts, exceeding " in every kind of intemperance; their adulteries, fetters; " their lying with mankind, and mortals begotten of im- " mortal gods." (*De Nat. Deor, Lib.* I. §. 16.) And again, in the person of a Stoic, he thus reprobates the same system: " The introduction of feigned gods, has begotten false " opinions, and turbulent errors and superstitions, no better " than old wives' fables; for the figures of the gods, their " ages, dress, and ornaments, are set forth; their alliances, " marriages, affinities; and all are reduced to the similitude " of human imbecility: They are brought in as men dis- " turbed by passion; we hear of their lusts, sickness, " anger; yea as fables tell us, the gods have not wanted " wars and battles ..... These things are said and *believed* " most sottishly, and are full of extreme vanity and futility." " (*Ibid. Lib.* II. §. 28.)

To these base gods, however, temples were erected, and divine honours paid. They had their costly trains of priests, services, sacrifices, festivals, and games. Some of their rites were atrociously cruel, others infamous for debauchery, prostitution, and the most unbridled excesses. Hence corruption was diffused among the people, the moral system, even of the philosophers, was very defective, and their allowed practices, in some respects abominable.

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choice which might be made of the latter, and was alone absolutely contended for. The channel of the English language, however, has been preferred, in the present plan, as being deemed the most ample and effectual; and though new, also safe and highly advantageous. Against this channel, however, the writer thinks it possible, that reluctancies may remain when arguments are obviated. Strongly as he is himself persuaded, that great and peculiar advantages would flow from it, he nevertheless would

sionary speculator, *is the principle of the Gospel itself.*

The Gospel was propagated by missionaries; missionaries planted it in the different countries of Europe. Almost all those countries have, in imitation of the same practice, sent missionaries into infidel parts; and how is it possible for men to communicate it otherwise? In this kingdom, two societies are established by royal charter, for propagating the Gospel in Heathen lands; and there is a third society of long standing, employed in the same object, which enrolls among its members, many of the most eminent persons of the nation. So much for the antiquity, authority and general acknowledgment of *this principle*, which is treated as if nothing like it had ever been heard of before.

2d. It is obvious, that the first and second classes of specific objections, militate against each other. Since the scheme proposes only a pacific exposition of Christian truths, it cannot be both dangerous and unsuccessful. The danger is avowedly founded mainly, if not wholly, on the supposition of success. If success therefore is not to be hoped for, where is the danger? And again, if the scheme really threatens so much danger, what becomes of the argument against success?

These contradictory objections cannot both be just. The same speaker however, who is reported to have "*thanked God*" that the conversion of the natives would be a matter of *impracticability*, strenuously opposed the scheme on this ground, that the moment they and we came to hold one faith there would be an end of our supremacy in the East: but if he thought it *impracticable* to convert them to our faith, with what reason could he urge the *danger* which would follow from such conversion as a serious and alarming objection? When the *cause* does not *exist*, neither can that, which can only flow from it as its *effect*.

3d. The *principle of not communicating to the Hindoos the Christian religion, lest this should in the end, destroy our government over them*, is however here fairly acknowledged and argued upon. The establishment of seminaries and colleges in our American colonies, is in the same spirit adverted to in a way of warning; as if Christianity had produced the revolution there, when in fact they were men of infidel opinions, who planned both the American and French revolutions.

The reason assigned in justification of this precautionary principle also deserves attention; "be-"cause holding one religion is the most strong "common cause with mankind." If the proposal had been, that the English should become converts to Hindooism, this argument might have been well placed; but applied to the present scheme, it can only operate in favour of it.

4th. It is curious to find it alleged, among the arguments against the proposed clauses, that some of the Hindoos were too good, and others too bad to be converted.

This was advanced by only one gentleman, little acquainted with India, whose speech happening by a common newspaper to reach the Reverend Mr. Swartz, already noticed as long a missionary of distinguished reputation in the Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts, produced from him a vindication of the conduct and effects of the mission in which he is concerned; a vindication framed indeed in modest and simple terms, suitable to the character of the writer, but highly honourable to the cause of missions, and though he intended it not, to his own. This piece, too good to be concealed, has been printed in the Transactions of the English Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and a copy of it is given in the Appendix.

The assertion of the same speaker, that the higher natives of India are people of the purest morality and strictest virtue, is altogether new, and in palpable opposition to testimony and experience. Upon the gospel scheme, no man is too good or too bad for the benefits it proposes; and there is a very large class between the best and the worst, of whom the speaker took no notice. His other assertion, that the ceremonies of religion, or the service of the Common-prayer Book, were with great decency and devotion regularly performed by laymen on board the Company's ships, and on land, in places where there happened to be no clergyman, is a topic for ridicule, if the subject were not of so serious a kind; the reverse of this assertion being so notorious. And is there no use for a minister of religion, but to perform a ceremony, or to read a form of prayer once a week?

5th. The objections urged on the ground of the *unlimited* expence of the scheme, the *unlimited* numbers of the clergy that would be sent, their *improper* character, and *their roving through the country*, all go upon assumptions not only unwarranted, but contradicted by the tenor of the clauses themselves, and in opposition to the dictates of common sense. The Directors of the Company were themselves to be entrusted with the execution of the scheme; they were to judge of the number of missionaries sufficient, they were to regulate the expence. Was it conceivable, that they would have gone, in either article, to a length burthensome or dangerous to the Company? Was it conceivable that they would have suffered missionaries to ramble, at their pleasure, through the country, if the missionaries sent should have been men so disposed? but can it be imagined, that the friends of the scheme, and the respectable authorities whose testimonials were to render the missionaries receivable by the Company, (not to force them into their employ,) would have had so little regard to the success of their own object, as to select persons the least likely to promote it? In fact, the danger was of another kind; so much was left in the discretion of the Directors that if they should have had the disposition, they might also have possessed the power, very materially to thwart the prosecution of the scheme. And as to the real number and expence of missionaries at first, the former, if proper persons should have been found, would perhaps have been thirty; and the annual charge of their establishment, including dwellings, probably about fourteen thousand pounds.

6th. Upon the whole of this discussion, it appears to have been undertaken with a vehement determination against the principle of introducing Christianity among our Asiatic subjects; but without much previous consideration, or a large acquaintance with its bearings and relations, still less with a dispassionate temper of mind; for arguments subversive of each other, assertions palpably erroneous, assumptions clearly unwarrantable, were pressed into the opposition; the question was argued chiefly upon a partial view of supposed political expediency, and the supreme importance

would do injustice to the cause for which he pleads, if he were to suspend its success entirely upon the adoption of this mode. The channel of the country languages, though less spacious, less clear, less calculated to transmit the general light of our opinions, our arts, and sciences, less free also for the conveyance of the light of religion itself, is nevertheless so far capable of rendering this last and most important service, in which are essentially involved all the other proposed meliorations, that if the question were between making no attempt, or making it in this way, undoubtedly there could be no hesitation. This mode ought, by no means to be declined or neglected, if there were no other. Through the medium of the country languages, though more contracted, more dim, and distant, still something may be done, and that in a concern which is of the last importance to present and to future happiness. But in choosing this method, more instruments ought necessarily to be employed; and then the meliorations which are so much wanted, may in time be partly effected; and the apprehensions which some may entertain from the diffusion of the English language, will have no place. But still it must be maintained, that for every great purpose of the proposed scheme, the introduction and use of that language would be most effectual; and the exclusion of it, the loss of unspeakable benefits, and a just subject of extreme regret.

THUS, we trust, it has been evinced, that although many excellent improvements have of late years been made in the government of our Indian territories, the moral character and condition of the natives of them is extremely depraved, and that the state of society among that people is, in consequence, wretched. These evils have been shewn to lie beyond the reach of our regulations, merely political, however good; they have been traced to their civil and religious institutions; they have been proved to inhere in the general spirit and many positive enactments of their laws, and more powerfully still in the false, corrupt, impure, extravagant, and ridiculous principles and tenets of their religion. Upon any of these points, it is conceived, that persons who either form their opinion, from actual observation, or from the current of testimony, will not greatly differ; shades of distinction there may be between them, but no substantial, radical contrariety. A remedy has been proposed for these evils;—the introduction of our light and knowledge among that benighted people, especially the pure, salutary, wise principles of our divine religion. That remedy has appeared to be in its nature suitable and adequate; the practicability also of applying it has been sufficiently established; our obligation to impart it has been argued, we would hope convincingly, from the past effects of our administration in those countries, from the more imperious consideration of the duties we owe to the people of them as our subjects, and from our own evident interest, as involved and consulted in their welfare. Our obligation has been likewise urged from another argument, the authority and command of that true religion which we have ourselves the happiness to enjoy and profess*. As the leading subject of this essay has been intentionally treated chiefly upon political grounds, the argument now mentioned has not been insisted upon at great length; but all its just rights are claimed for it, and it is transcendent and conclusive.

Nothing it would seem besides these intrinsic properties of the proposed measure, and these powerful extraneous motives, can be necessary to recommend the adoption of it. Yet since some persons have appeared to think, that the improvements which they allow to be likely from the prosecution of the suggested scheme might, by producing a course of encreasing prosperity, at length open the way to consequences unfavourable to the stability of our Indian possessions, these conceived consequences have

importance, authority, and command, of Christianity, were left out of sight.

It ought to be remarked, upon the second of the two resolutions passed in the House of Commons, that the maintenance of a chaplain on board every ship of considerable size, employed in the long navigation to and from India, was the early spontaneous practice of the Company, and enjoined to them in the charters of King William and Queen Anne, the clauses of which, respecting this point, the said resolution did no more than revive.

* To disallow either the fitness of our religion as a remedy, or our obligation to promote the knowledge of it, would be to differ from the reasoning of this essay in first principles; and such a difference, if any mind were influenced by it to resist the projected communication, ought in candour to be avowed.

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have also been largely examined; and if the whole of the reasoning used by the writer has not been erroneous, they have been found to resolve themselves at last into mere apprehensions, conjectures, and general surmises, which the causes assigned for them seem so little to warrant, that in proportion to the degree in which those causes may actually exist, effects propitious to the permanence, as well as prosperity of our Eastern dominion, effects more propitious than our present system can generate, may rather be expected from them; as indeed it would not be less a phenomenon in the political than in the natural world, that from a root the most excellent, the worst fruit should be produced. The principle also upon which such consequences are objected, and the improvement of our Heathen subjects opposed, the principle of keeping them for ever in darkness and error, lest our interest should suffer by a change, has been shown to be utterly inadmissible in a moral view, as it is likewise contrary to all just policy.

In reasoning about things future and contingent, the writer would wish to stand remote from whatever should have the appearance of dogmatical decision, which indeed is not the right of even superior penetration, and to speak with that diffidence of himself, and deference for others, which so well become him; he would wish to speak for no cause further than the truth will bear him out; but the views he entertains of the present subject afford him no other conclusions than those he has advanced, and in them he thinks he is well supported. That a great remedy is wanted; that we have an excellent one in our hands; that it is our duty, on general and special grounds, to apply it; all these, are in his apprehension, positions nearly self-evident: from these alone a strong presumption, he conceives, arises, that it must be our interest to make the application; and if cogent specific reasons are further adduced to prove, that our interest would, in fact, thus be promoted, opposition to this scheme ought, in his opinion, to be justified by arguments very clear and very powerful; and such, he must honestly say, he has not been able to discover.

This subject has not hitherto received a formal consideration; but the objection which would resist all improvement, lest future inconvenience should arise from it, necessarily brings on this decisive question, whether we shall, in all time to come, passively leave our subjects in the darkness, error, and moral turpitude in which they now grovel, or shall communicate to them the light of truth, and the means of melioration, and of happiness personal and social? The question may more properly be,—whether we should *keep* our subjects in their present state? For if improvement ought not to be communicated to them, we should not be merely passive, but be careful to exclude it; as on the other hand if it ought to be communicated, or if it is possible that any rays of light may fortuitously break in upon them, we should not leave the task to others, or to chance, but be ourselves the dispensers of the new principles they receive, and regulate the administration of them. This question then is to determine the grand moral and political principle, by which we shall henceforth, and in all future generations, govern and deal with our Asiatic subjects: Whether we shall make it our study to impart to them knowledge, light, and happiness; or under the notion of holding them more quietly in subjection, shall seek to keep them ignorant, corrupt, and mutually injurious, as they are now? The question is not, whether we shall resort to any persecution, to any compulsion, to any sinister means:—No; the idea has been frequently disclaimed; it is an odious idea, abhorrent from the spirit of true religion; but whether, knowing as we do the falsehood and impiety of idolatrous polytheistic superstitions, knowing the cruelties, the immoralities, the degrading extravagancies and impositions of the Hindoo system, we shall silently and calmly leave them in all the fulness of their operation, without telling our subjects, who ought to be our children, that they are wrong, that they are deluded, and hence plunged into many miseries? Whether, instead of rationally, mildly explaining to them the divine principles of moral and religious truth, which have raised us in the scale of being, and are the foundation of all real goodness and happiness, we shall wink at the stupidity which we deem profitable to us; and as governors, be in effect the conservators of that system which deceives the people? Whether, in a word, we shall do all this merely from fear, lest in emerging from ignorance and error, they should be less easy to rule, and our dominion over them be exposed to any risk.

The wisdom, as well as the fairness of such a proceeding, must also be determined; whether on the whole it would be the best policy for our own interest, even if we look only to the natural operation of things: and here at least we should be careful

careful and clear; for if we mistake our interest, we lose our all, the very thing to which we sacrifice other considerations: especially it should be pondered, whether believing the moral government of the world, we can expect the approbation and continued support of the supreme Ruler of it, by willingly acquiescing in so much error, so much moral and political evil, when so many just means for the alleviation of them are in our power.

These are the inquiries which this subject presents; the inquiries which fidelity to it, and to all the interests involved in it, would not permit the writer to suppress when he originally considered it; and the same motives, to which he may add, the duty of the station wherein he has since had the honour to be placed, forbid him to keep them back now: But does he in stating them, mean to point them offensively to any individual or body of men? No,—far from it; they were, at first, penned as they are now delivered, in good will and with a general aim: in this great question he strives rather to abstract his mind from personal recollections; and if it glances involuntarily at the idea of any one who he fears may not accord with his sentiments, if he should especially dread to find among such any whom he particularly respects and loves, it is a painful wound to his feelings. He cannot wish to offend or to dispute,—he has no objects to serve by such means; and is sufficiently aware of the situation in which a work of this nature may place him, both in Europe and in India, never to have brought it forward but from some serious sense of duty. This question is a general one; if it seem to carry in it any retrospective censure, that censure applies to the country and to the age. Circumstances have now called for a more particular consideration of it, and of the result of that consideration he entertains encouraging hopes. He will not allow himself to believe, that when so many noble and beneficial ends may be served by our possession of an empire in the East, we shall content ourselves with the meanest and the least, and for the sake of this, frustrate all the rest. He trusts we shall dare to do justice, liberal justice, and be persuaded, that this principle will carry us to greater heights of prosperity, than the precautions of a selfish policy. Future events are inscrutable to the keenest speculation, but the path of duty is open, the time present is ours. By planting our language, our knowledge, our opinions, and our religion, in our Asiatic territories, we shall put a great work beyond the reach of contingencies; we shall probably have wedded the inhabitants of those territories to this country; but at any rate, we shall have done an act of strict duty to them, and a lasting service to mankind.

In considering the affairs of the world as under the controul of the supreme Disposer, and those distant territories, as by strange events, providentially put into our hands, is it not reasonable, is it not necessary, to conclude that they were given to us, not merely that we might draw an annual profit from them, but that we might diffuse among their inhabitants, long sunk in darkness, vice, and misery, the light and the benign influences of truth, the blessings of well-regulated society, the improvements and the comforts of active industry? And that in prudently and sincerely endeavouring to answer these ends, we may not only humbly hope for some measure of the same success which has usually attended serious and rational attempts for the propagation of that pure and sublime religion which comes from God, but best secure the protection of his providential government, of which we now see such awful marks in the events of the world.

In every progressive step of this work, we shall also serve the original design with which we visited India, that design still so important to this country,—the extension of our commerce. Why is it that so few of our manufactures and commodities are vended there? Not merely because the taste of the people is not generally formed to the use of them, but because they have not the means of purchasing them. The proposed improvements would introduce both. As it is, our woollens, our manufactures in iron, copper, and steel, our clocks, watches, and toys of different kinds, our glass-ware, and various other articles are admired there, and would sell in great quantities if the people were rich enough to buy them. Let invention be once awakened among them, let them be roused to improvements at home, let them be led by industry to multiply, as they may exceedingly, the exchangeable productions of their country, let them acquire a relish for the ingenious exertions of the human mind in Europe, for the beauties and refinements, endlessly diversified, of European art and science, and we shall hence obtain for ourselves the supply of four and twenty millions of distant subjects. How greatly will our country be thus aided in rising still superior to all her difficulties; and how stable, as well as unrivalled, may we hope our commerce will be,

when

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when we thus rear it on right principles, and make it the means of their extension? It might be too sanguine to form into a wish, an idea most pleasing and desirable in itself, that our religion and our knowledge might be diffused over other dark portions of the globe, where nature has been more kind than human institutions.—This is the noblest species of conquest; and wherever, we may venture to say, our principles and language are introduced, our commerce will follow.

To rest in the present state of things, or to determine that the situation of our Asiatic subjects, and our connection with them, are such as they ought to be for all time to come, seems too daring a conclusion: and if a change, a great change be necessary, no reason can be assigned for its commencement at any future period, which will not equally, nay, more strongly recommend its commencement now. To say, that things may be left to their own course, or that our European settlements may prove a sufficient nursery of moral and religious instruction for the natives, will be, in effect, to declare, that there shall be no alteration, at least no effectual and safe one.

The Mahomedans, living for centuries intermixed in great numbers with the Hindoos, produced no radical change in their character; not merely because they rendered themselves disagreeable to their subjects, but because they left those subjects, during that whole period, as uninstructed in essential points as they found them. We are called rather to imitate the Roman conquerors, who civilized and improved the nations whom they subdued; and we are called to this, not only by the obvious wisdom which directed their policy, but by local circumstances, as well as by sounder principles and higher motives than they possessed.

The examples also of modern European nations pass in review before us. We are the fourth of those who have possessed an Indian empire. That of the Portugueze, though acquired by romantic bravery, was unsystematic and rapacious; the short one of the French was the meteor of a vain ambition; the Dutch acted upon the principles of a selfish commercial policy; and these, under which they apparently flourished for a time, have been the cause of their decline and fall. None of these nations sought to establish themselves in the affections of their acquired subjects, or to assimilate them to their manners; and those subjects, far from supporting them, rejoiced in their defeat: some attempts they made to instruct the natives, which had their use; but sordid views overwhelmed their effects. It remains for us to shew how we shall be distinguished from these nations in the history of mankind; whether conquest shall have been in our hands the means, not merely of displaying a government unequalled in India for administrative justice, kindness, and moderation, not merely of encreasing the security of the subject and prosperity of the country, but of advancing social happiness, of meliorating the moral state of men, and of extending a superior light, further than the Roman eagle ever flew.

If the novelty, the impracticability, the danger of the proposed scheme, be urged against it, these objections cannot all be consistent; and the last, which is the only one that could have weight, presupposes success. In success would lie our safety, not our danger. Our danger must lie in pursuing, from ungenerous ends, a course contracted and illiberal; but in following an opposite course, in communicating light, knowledge, and improvement, we shall obey the dictates of duty, of philanthropy, and of policy; we shall take the most rational means to remove inherent, great disorders, to attach the Hindoo people to ourselves, to ensure the safety of our possessions, to enhance continually their value to us, to raise a fair and durable monument to the glory of this country, and to encrease the happiness of the human race.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Extract from the Transactions of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, for the year 1795.

Appendix.

"ANOTHER letter has been received from Mr. Swartz, dated at Tanjore, February 13th, 1794, which being of a particularly interesting nature, the Society judge fit to produce at length. As moreover the Society, after forty years experience, have had constant reason to approve of Mr. Swartz's integrity and veracity as a correspondent, his zeal as a promoter of Christian knowledge, and his labours as a missionary, they take this opportunity of acknowledging his faithful services, and recommending his letter to the consideration of the Public, as containing a just statement of facts relating to the mission, believing that Mr. Swartz is incapable of departing from the truth, in the minutest particular."

To the Reverend Dr. GASKIN, *Secretary to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.*

Reverend and Dear Sir, Tanjore, February 13, 1794.

AS His Majesty's seventy-fourth regiment is partly stationed at Tanjore, and partly at Vallam, six English miles distant from Tanjore, we commonly go once in a week to Vallam, to perform divine service to four companies of that regiment.

When I lately went to that place, the 210th number of a newspaper, called the Courier, Friday evening, May 24th, 1793, was communicated to me.

In that paper I found a paragraph, delivered by Mr. Montgomerie Campbell (who came out to India with Sir Archibald Campbell, in the station of a private secretary) wherein my name was mentioned in the following manner:

"Mr. Montgomerie Campbell gave his decided vote against the clause, and reprobated the idea of converting the Gentoos. It is true, missionaries have made proselytes of the Parriars; but they were the lowest order of people, and had even degraded the religion they professed to embrace.

"Mr. Swartz, whose character was held so deservedly high, could not have any reason to boast of the purity of his followers: they were proverbial for their profligacy. An instance occurred to his recollection, perfectly in point;—he had been preaching for many hours to this caste of proselytes, on the heinousness of theft, and in the heat of his discourse, taken off his stock, when that and his gold buckle were stolen by one of his virtuous and enlightened congregation. In such a description of natives, did the doctrine of the missionaries operate. Men of high caste would spurn at the idea of changing the religion of their ancestors."

As this paragraph is found in a public paper, I thought it would not displease the Honourable Society to make a few observations on it; not to boast (which I detest) but to declare the plain truth, and to defend my brethren and myself.

About seventeen years ago, when I resided at *Tiruchinapally*, I visited the congregation at Tanjore. In my road, I arrived very early at a village which is inhabited by *Collaries*, a set of people who are infamous for stealing; even the name of a Collary (or better, *Kallen*) signifieth a thief.

These *Collaries* make nightly excursions, in order to rob. They drive away bullocks and sheep, and whatever they can find; for which outrage, they annually pay fifteen hundred chakr, or seven hundred and fifty pagodas, to the Rajah.

Of this caste of people, many live in the Tanjore country, still more in Tondiman's country, and likewise in the Nabob's country.

When I arrived at one of those villages, called *Pudaloor*, I took off my stock, putting it upon a sand-bank. Advancing a little to look out for the man who carried my linen clothes, I was regardless of the stock, at which time, some thievish boys took it away. Not one grown person was present. When the inhabitants heard of the theft, they desired me to confine all those boys, and to punish them as severely as I pleased.

But I refused to do that, not thinking that the trifle which I had lost was worth so much trouble.

That such boys, whose fathers are professed thieves, should commit a theft, can be no matter of wonder.

All the inhabitants of that village were Heathens; *not one Christian family* was found therein.

Many of our gentlemen, travelling through that village, have been robbed.

Appendix.

The trifle of a buckle I did therefore not lose *by a Christian*, as Mr. Montgomerie Campbell will have it, but by Heathen boys.

Neither did I preach at that time: Mr. Montgomerie Campbell says that I preached two hours: I did not so much as converse with any man.

This poor story totally misrepresented, is alleged by Mr. Montgomerie Campbell to prove the profligacy of Christians, whom he called, with a sneer, virtuous and enlightened people.

If Mr. Montgomerie Campbell has no better proof, his conclusion is built upon a bad foundation, and I shall not admire his logic: truth is against him.

Neither is it true, that the best part of those people who have been instructed, are *Parriars*. Had Mr. Montgomerie Campbell visited, even once, our church, he would have observed that *more than two thirds were of the higher caste*; and so is it at Tranquebar and Vepery.

Our intention is not to boast; but this I may safely say, that many of those people who have been instructed, have left this world with comfort, and with a well-grounded hope of everlasting life.

That some of those who have been instructed and baptized, have abused the benefit of instruction, is certain. But all sincere servants of God, nay even the Apostles, have experienced this grief.

It is asserted, that a missionary is a disgrace to any country. Lord Macartney, and the late General Coote, would have entertained a very different opinion. They, and many other gentlemen, know and acknowledge, that the missionaries have been beneficial to government, and a comfort to the country.

This I am able to prove, in the strongest manner. * Many gentlemen who live now in England, and in this country, would corroborate my assertion.

That the Reverend Mr. Gerické has been of eminent service to Cuddalore, every gentleman, who was at Cuddalore at the time when the war broke out, knows. He was the instrument, in the hands of Providence, by which Cuddalore was saved from plunder and bloodshed.

He saved many gentlemen from becoming prisoners to Hyder, which Lord Macartney kindly acknowledged.

When Nagapatnam, that rich and popular city, fell into the deepest poverty, by the unavoidable consequences of war, Mr. Gerické behaved like a father to the distressed people of that city. He forgot that he had a family to provide for. Many impoverished families were supported by him; so that when I, a few months ago, preached and administered the sacrament in that place, I saw many who owed their, and their childrens' lives, to his disinterested care. Surely this, my friend, could not be called a disgrace to that place. When the Honourable Society ordered him to attend the congregation at Madras, all lamented his departure. And at Madras, he is esteemed by the governor, and many other gentlemen, to this day.

It is a most disagreeable task to speak of oneself. However, I hope that the Honourable Society will not look upon some observations which I am to make, as a vain and sinful boasting, but rather as a necessary self-defence. Neither the missionaries, nor many of the Christians, have hurt the welfare of the country.

In the time of war, the fort of Tanjore was in a distressed condition. A powerful enemy was near; the people in the Fort, numerous; and not provision even for the garrison. There was grain enough in the country, but we had no bullocks to bring it into the Fort. When the country people formerly brought paddy (rice in the husk) into the Fort, the rapacious dubashes deprived them of their due pay. Hence all confidence was lost; so that the inhabitants drove away their cattle, refusing to assist the Fort. The late Rajah ordered, nay intreated the people, by his managers, to come and help us; but all was in vain.

At last the Rajah said to one of our principal gentlemen: "We all, you and I, have lost our credit; let us try whether the inhabitants will trust Mr. Swartz." Accordingly he sent me a blank paper, empowering me to make a proper agreement with the people. Here was no time for hesitation. The seapoys fell down as dead people, being emaciated with hunger; our streets were lined with dead corpses every morning; our condition was deplorable. I sent, therefore, letters, every where round about, promising to pay any one, with my own hands; and to pay them for any bullock which might be taken by the enemy. In one or two days, I got above a thousand bullocks, and sent one of our catechists, and other Christians, into the country. They went at the risk of their lives, made all possible haste, and brought into the Fort, in a very short time, eighty thousand kalams (of rice.) By this means, the Fort was saved. When all was over, I paid the people (even with some money which belonged to others) made them a small present, and sent them home.

The next year, when Colonel Braithwaite, with his whole detachment, was taken prisoner, Major Alcock commanded this Fort, and behaved very kindly to the poor starving people. We were then, the second time, in the same miserable condition. The enemy always invaded the country when the harvest was nigh at hand. I was again desired to try my former expedient, and succeeded. The people knew that they were not to be deprived of their pay, they therefore came with their cattle. But now the danger was greater, as the enemy was very near. The Christians conducted the inhabitants to proper places, surely with no small danger of losing their lives. Accordingly they wept, and went, and supplied the Fort with grain. When the inhabitants were paid, I strictly enquired whether any of the Christians had taken from them a present. They all said, No, no; as we were so regularly paid, we offered to your catechist a cloth of small value, but he absolutely refused it.

But

But Mr. Montgomerie Campbell says, that the Christians are profligate to a proverb.

If Mr. Montgomerie Campbell was near me, I would explain to him who are the profligate people who drain the country. When a dubash, in the space of ten or fifteen years, scrapes together two, three, or four lacks of pagodas, is not this extortion a high degree of profligacy?

Nay, government was obliged to send an order, that three of those Gentoo dubashes should quit the Tanjore country. The enormous crimes committed by them, filled the country with complaints; but I have no mind to enumerate them.

It is asserted, that the inhabitants of the country would suffer by missionaries.

If the missionaries are sincere Christians, it is impossible that the inhabitants should suffer any damage by them. If they are not what they profess to be, they ought to be dismissed.

When Sir Archibald Campbell was governor, and Mr. Montgomerie Campbell his private secretary, the inhabitants of the Tanjore country were so miserably oppressed by the manager and the Madras dubashes, that they quitted the country: of course, all cultivation ceased. In the month of June, the cultivation should commence; but nothing was done, even at the beginning of September. Every one dreaded the calamity of a famine. I entreated the Rajah to remove that shameful oppression, and to recal the inhabitants. He sent them word, that justice should be done to them; but they disbelieved his promises. He then desired *me* to write to them, and to assure them, that he, at my intercession, would show kindness to them. I did so. All immediately returned; and first of all, the Kallar (or as they are commonly called, Collaries) believed my word, so that seven thousand men came back on one day. The other inhabitants followed their example. When I exhorted them to exert themselves to the utmost, because the time for cultivation was almost lost, they replied in the following manner: "As you have showed kindness to us, you shall not have reason to repent of it; we intend to work night and day, to show our regard for you."

Sir Archibald Campbell was happy when he heard it; and we had the satisfaction of having a better crop than the preceding year.

As there was hardly any administration of justice, I begged and entreated the Rajah to establish justice in his country. "Well," said he, "let me know wherein my people are oppressed." I did so. He immediately consented to my proposal, and told his manager, that he should feel his indignation, if the oppression did not cease immediately. But as he soon died, he did not see the execution.

When the present Rajah began his reign, I put Sir Archibald Campbell in mind of that necessary point. He desired me to make a plan for a court of justice, which I did; but it was soon neglected by the servants of the Rajah, who commonly sold justice to the best bidder.

When the Honourable Company took possession of the country, during the war, the plan for introducing justice was re-assumed; by which many people were made happy. But when the country was restored to the Rajah, the former irregularities took place.

During the assumption, government desired *me* to assist the gentlemen collectors. The district towards the west of Tanjore had been very much neglected, so that the water-courses had not been cleansed for the last fifteen years. I proposed that the collector should advance five hundred pagodas to cleanse those water-courses. The gentlemen consented if I would inspect the business. The work was begun and finished, being inspected by Christians. All that part of the country rejoiced in getting one hundred thousand collums (of rice) more than before. The inhabitants confessed, that instead of one collum, they now reaped four.

No inhabitant has suffered by Christians; none has complained of it. On the contrary, one of the richest inhabitants said to me; "Sir, if you send a person to us, send us one who has learned all your ten commandments;" for he, and many hundred inhabitants, had been present when I explained the Christian doctrine to Heathens and Christians.

The inhabitants dread the conduct of a Madras dubash. These people lend money to the Rajah, at an exorbitant interest, and then are permitted to collect their money and interest, in an appointed district. It is needless to mention the consequences.

When the Collaries committed great outrages in their plundering expeditions, Seapoys were sent out to adjust matters; but it had no effect. Government desired *me* to inquire into that thievish business. I therefore sent letters to the head Collaries; they appeared; we found out, in some degree, how much the Tanjore, and Tondaman's, and the Nabob's Collaries had stolen; and we insisted upon restoration, which was done accordingly. At last, all gave it in writing, that they would steal no more. This promise they kept very well for eight months, and then they began their old work; however, not as before. Had that inspection over their conduct been continued, they might have been made useful people. I insisted upon (their) cultivating their fields, which they really did. But if the demands become exorbitant, they have no resource they think, but that of plundering.

At last some of those thievish Collaries desired to be instructed. I said, "I am obliged to instruct you; but I am afraid that you will become very bad Christians." Their promises were fair. I instructed them; and when they had a tolerable knowledge, I baptized them. Having baptized them, I exhorted them to steal no more, but to work industriously. After that, I visited them; and having examined their knowledge, I desired to see their work. I observed, with pleasure, that their fields were excellently cultivated. "Now," said I, "one thing remains to be done. You must pay your tribute readily, and not wait "till it is exacted by military force," which otherwise is their custom. Soon after that, I found that they had paid off their tribute exactly.

The

Appendix.

The only complaint against those Christian Collaries was, that they refused to go upon plundering expeditions, as they had done before.

Now I am well aware, that some will accuse me of having boasted. I confess the charge willingly, but lay all the blame upon those who have constrained me to commit that folly.

I might have enlarged my account; but fearing that some characters would have suffered by it, I stop here.

One thing, however, I affirm, before God and man, that if Christianity, in its plain and undisguised form, was properly promoted, the country would not suffer, but be benefited by it.

If Christians were employed in some important offices, they should, if they misbehaved, be doubly punished; but to reject them entirely, is not right, and discourageth.

The glorious God, and our blessed Redeemer, has commanded his Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations.

The knowledge of God, and his divine perfections, and of his mercy to mankind, may be abused; but there is no other method of reclaiming mankind, than by instructing them well. To hope that the Heathens will live a good life, without the knowledge of God, is a chimera.

The praise bestowed on the Heathens of this country, by many of our historians, is refuted by a close (I might almost say, superficial) inspection of their lives. Many historical works are more like a romance than history. Many gentlemen here are astonished, how some historians have prostituted their talents by writing fables.

I am now at the brink of eternity; but to this moment I declare, that I do not repent of having spent forty-three years in the service of my Divine Master. Who knows but God may remove some of the great obstacles to the propagation of the Gospel? Should a reformation take place amongst the Europeans, it would no doubt be the greatest blessing to the country.

These observations I beg leave to lay before the Honourable Society, with my humble thanks for all their benefits bestowed on this work, and sincere wishes that their pious and generous endeavours to disseminate the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, may be beneficial to many thousands.

I am sincerely,

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother, and humble Servant,

C. F. SWARTZ.

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OBSERVATIONS

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